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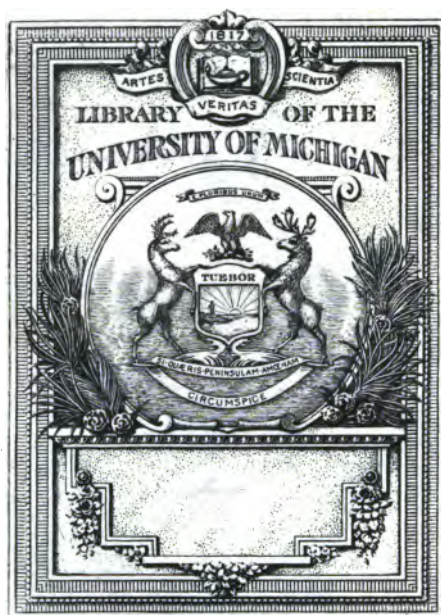
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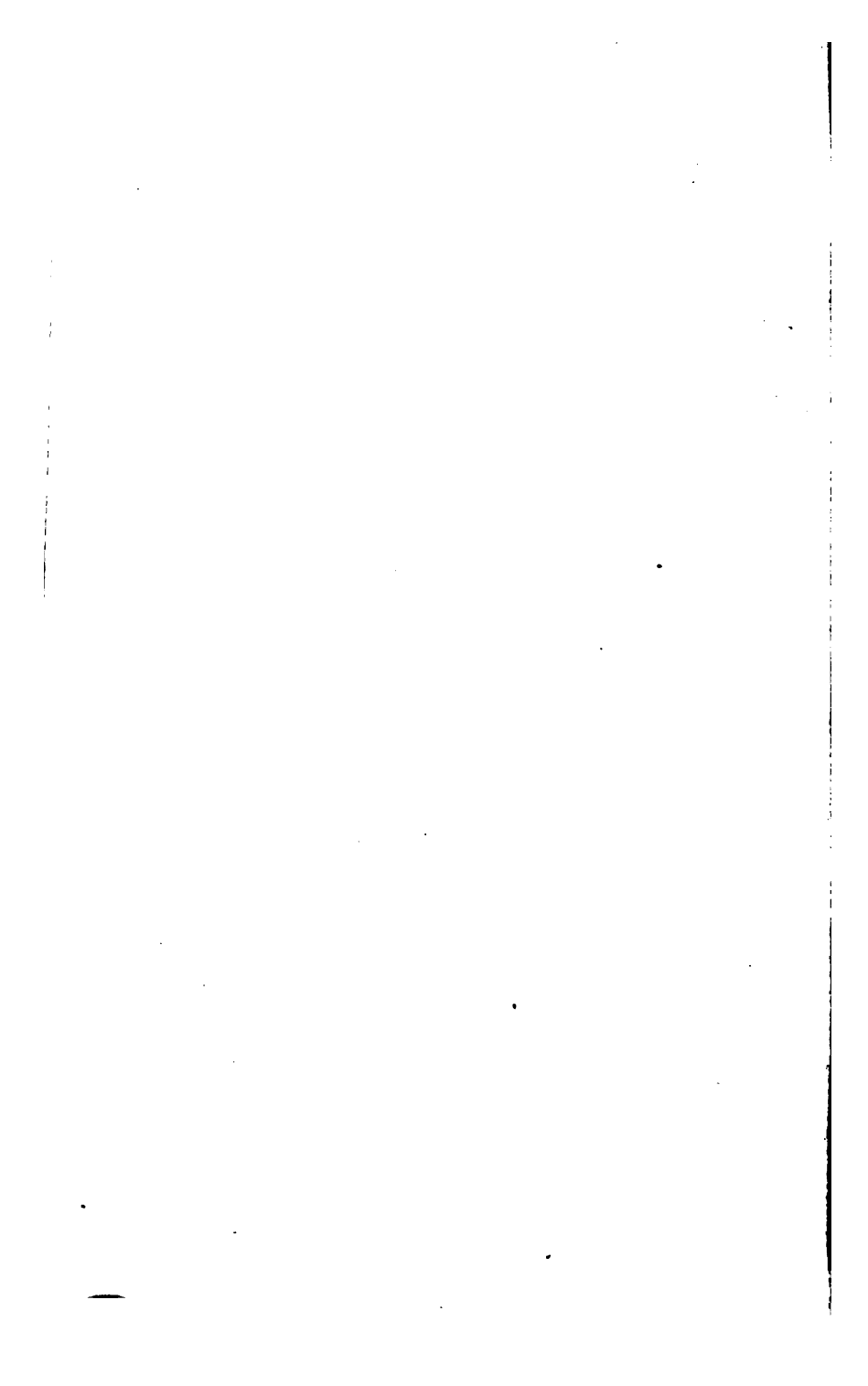


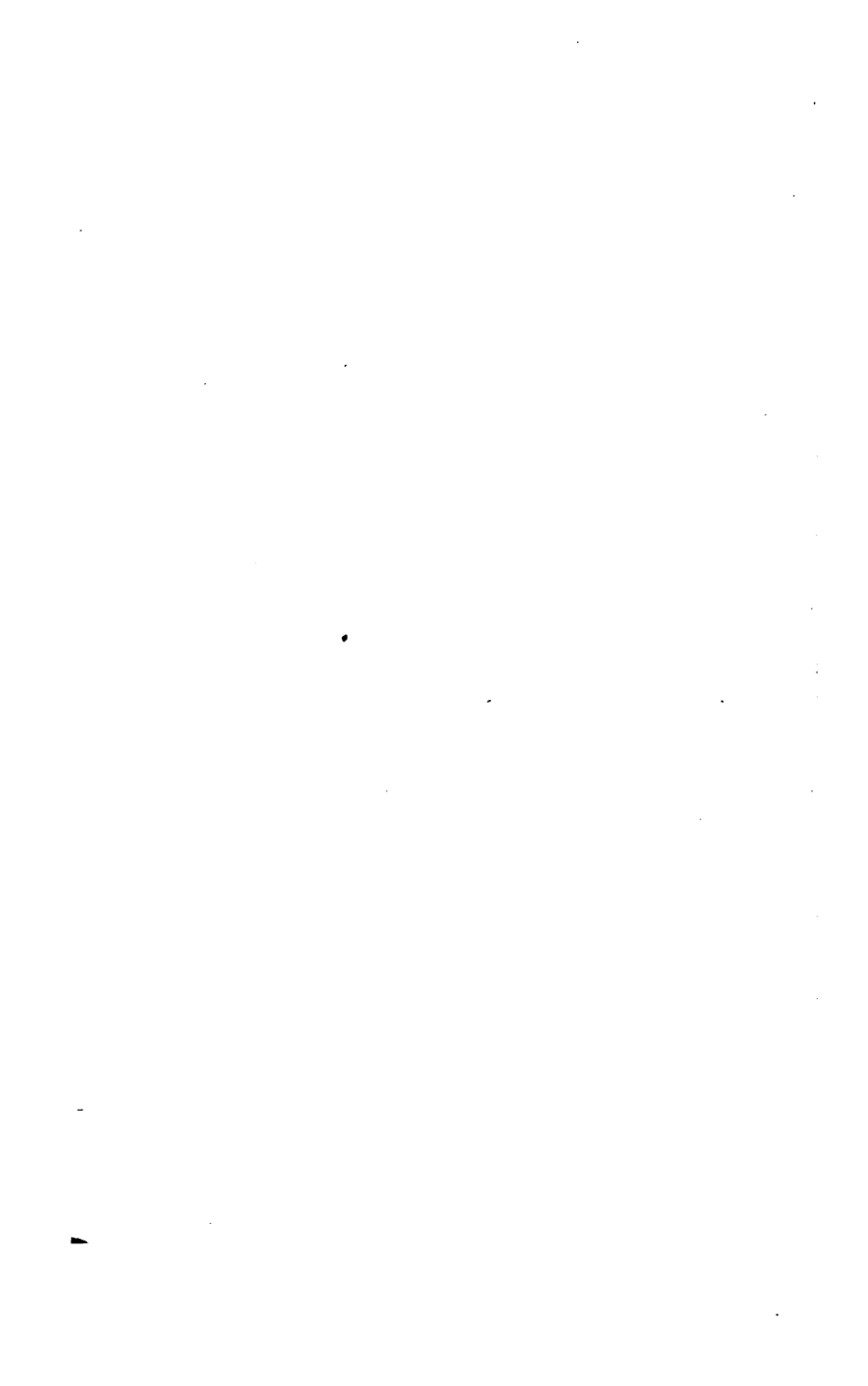
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CHAP. XX.

On the true Arts of Popularity.

CICERO says, "that it is the property of justice not to injure men, and of politeness not to offend them." True Christianity not only unites, but perfects both these qualities; and renders them, thus associated and exalted; powerful instruments, especially in princes, for the acquisition of popularity.

The desire of praise and reputation is commonly the first motive of action in second rate, and a secondary motive in first rate characters. That, in the former case, men who are not governed by a higher principle, are often so keenly alive to human opinion, as to be restrained by it from such

vices as would disturb the peace of society, is an instance of the useful provision made, by the great Governor of all things, for the good order of the world.

But in princes, none of whose actions are indifferent, who are "the observed of all observers," reputation cannot be too highly prized. A negligence respecting public opinion, or a contempt for the judgment of posterity, would be inexcusable in those, whose conduct must, in no inconsiderable degree, give, in their own time, the law to manners, and whose example will hereafter be adduced, by future historians, either to illustrate virtue, or to exemplify vice, and to stimulate to good or evil, Monarchs yet unborn.

"A Prince," however, as a late eloquent Statesman * observed in his own case, "should love that fame, which follows, not that which is pursued." He should bear in mind, that shadows owe their being to

* The first Earl of Mansfield.

substances ; that true fame derives its existence from something more solid than itself ; that reputation is not the precursor, nor the cause, but the fruit and effect of merit.

But though, in superficial characters, the hunger of popularity is the mainspring of action : and though the vain-glorious too often obtain, what they so sedulously seek, the acclamations of the vulgar ; yet a temperate desire to be loved and esteemed is so far from being a proof of vanity, that it even indicates the contrary propensity : for reasonably to wish for the good opinion of others, evinces that a man does not over-value and sit down contented with his own. It is an over estimation of himself, an undue complacency in his own merit, which is one of the causes of his disdain of public opinion. In profligate characters, another cause is, that, anticipating the contempt which they must be aware, they have deserved, they are willing to be beforehand with the world in proclaiming their disdain

of that reputation, which they know that their course of life has made unattainable.

Pagan philosophy, indeed, overrated *the honour which cometh from man*. But even the sacred scripture, which, as it is the only true fountain, is also the only just standard, of all excellence, does not teach us to despise, but only not to set an undue value upon it. It teaches us to estimate this honour in its due order and just measure; and above all, it exhorts us to see that it be sought on right grounds; to take care that it tempt not to vanity, by exciting to trifling pursuits; nor to vice, by stimulating to such as are base; nor to false honour, by seeking it in the paths of ambition. A prince must not be inordinate in the desire, nor irregular in the pursuit, nor immoderate in the enjoyment, nor criminally solicitous for the preservation, of fame; but he must win it fairly, and wear it temperately. He should pursue it not as the ultimate end of life, but as an object which, by making life honourable,

able, makes it useful. It must not, however, be omitted that the scriptures exhort, that ~~where~~ reputation can only be attained or preserved by the sacrifice of duty. It must then be renounced; that we must submit to the loss even of this precious jewel, rather than, by retaining it, wound the conscience, or offend God. Happily, however, in a country in which religion and laws are established on so firm a basis, a Prince is little likely to be called to such an absolute renunciation, though he may be called to many trials.

But all these dangers being provided for, and all abuses guarded against, the word of God does not scruple to pronounce reputation to be a valuable possession. In a competition with *riches*, the pre-eminence is assigned to a *good name*; and *wisdom*, that is, religion, in the bold language of Eastern imagery, is described as bearing *honour* in her left hand. Nor has the sacred volume been altogether silent, respecting even that posthumous renown which good princes

may expect in history. That *the memory of the just shall be blessed*, was the promise of one who was himself both an author and a Monarch. And that *the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance*, was the declaration of another royal author*.

A desire of popularity is still more honest in Princes than in other men. And when the end for which it is sought, and the means by which it is pursued, are strictly just, the desire is not only blameless, but highly laudable. Nor is it ever censurable, except where the affection of the people is sought, by plausible means, for pernicious purposes. On the part of the people attachment is a natural feeling, which nothing but persevering misconduct in their rulers can ever wear out. A prince should learn not to listen to those flatterers who would keep him ignorant of the public opinion. The discontents of the people should not be stifled before they reach the royal ear; nor should their

* See an admirable sermon of Dr. Barrow, on the reward of honouring God.

affection

affection be represented as a fund which can never be drained. It is a rich and precious stock, which should not be too often drawn upon. Imprudence will diminish, oppression will exhaust it. A Prince should never measure his rights over a people by the greatness of their attachment; the warmth of their zeal being a call for his kindness, not a signal for his exactions. Improvident rigour would wear out that affection, which justice would increase, and consideration confirm.

Britons, in general, possess that *obsequium erga reges*, which Tacitus ascribes to the Swedes. While they passionately love liberty, they also patiently bear those reasonable burthens which are necessary in order to preserve it. But this character of our countrymen seems not to have been so well understood, at least not so fairly represented, by one of their own sovereigns, as by a foreigner and an enemy. The unfortunate James calls them "a fickle, giddy, and rebellious people." If the charge were true, he and his family rather made,

than found them such. Agricola had pronounced them to be a people, "who cheerfully complied with the levies of men, and the imposition of taxes, and with all the duties enjoined by government, provided they met with just and lawful treatment from their governors." "Nor have the Romans," continues he, "any farther conquered them, than only to form them to obedience. *They never will submit to be slaves* *." It is pleasant to behold the freest of nations; even now, acting up to the character given them by the best of historians, on such unquestionable authority as that of their illustrious invader, near two thousand years ago.

Even the fatal catastrophe of Charles I. was not a national act, but the act of a fanatical party. The kingdom at large beheld the deed with deep abhorrence, and deplored it with unfeigned sorrow.—The fascinating manners of his son and successor so won the hearts of every one who ap-

* Tacitus's Life of Agricola.

proached

proached him, that it required all his vices to alienate them. If that gracious outward deportment was of so much use to him, in veiling, for a time, the most corrupt designs, how essentially must it serve a Prince who meditates only such as are beneficial ! William was not so happy as to find out this secret. Satisfied with having saved the country, he forgot that it was important to please it ; and he in some measure lost, by his forbidding manners, and his neglect of studying our national character, the hearts of a people who owed him their best blessings.

— Charles, the abject tool of France,
Came back to smile his subjects into slaves,
While Belgic William, with his warrior frown,
Coldly declared them free.

The charming frankness, and noble simplicity of manners, which distinguished Henry IV. of France, gained the affections of his subjects, more than all the refinements of artifice could have done. He had established such a reputation for sincerity,

cerity, that when, on a certain occasion, he offered hostages to his mortal enemies the Spaniards, they refused to accept them, and would only take his *word*. He frequently declared, that he would lose his crown rather than give, even to his worst foe, the least suspicion of his fidelity to his engagements. So happily infectious is this principle in a king, that not only Sully, but his other minister, Jeannin, was distinguished by the same strict regard to truth; and the popularity both of the king and his ministers was proportionably great.

The only way, then, for a prince to secure the affection of the people, is to deserve it; by letting them see that he is steadily consulting their interests, and invariably maintaining them. What but this so long preserved to Elizabeth that rooted regard in the hearts of her subjects? Certainly no pliancy of manners, no gracious complaisance. She treated even her parliaments in so peremptory a manner, that they sometimes only bore with it, from a thorough conviction,

conviction, that the interests of the country were secure in her hands, and its happiness as dear to her as her own *. These are the true foundations of popularity. He, who most consults the good of his people, will, in general, be most trusted by them; he who best merits their affection, will be most sure to obtain it, in spite of the arts of a cabal, or the turbulence of a faction.

Pagan fable relates, that when the inferior gods had once formed a conspiracy to bind Jupiter, Minerva advised him to send for Briareus, the monster with the hundred hands, to come to his assistance; the poets, doubtless, intimating by this fiction, that wisdom will always suggest to a Prince, that his best security will ever be found in the ready attachment and assist-

* "You have lived," says Lord Thomas Howard to his friend in James Ist's reign, "to see the trim of old times, and what passed in the Queen's days. These things are no more the same; your queen did talk of her subjects' *love* and *good affections*, and in good truth she aimed well: our king talketh of his subjects' *fear* and *subjection*," &c. &c.

ance

ness of the people. And it was a good practice which the famous Florentine secretary* records of the then king of France; that he would never allow any person to say, that *he was of the king's party*; which would always imply, that there was another party against him; whereas the king presently desired not to have it thought that there were any parties at all. And, indeed, wise sovereigns will study carefully to repress all narrowing terms, and dividing ideas. Of such sovereigns *the people are the party*.

Princes will have read history with little attention, if they do not learn from it, that their own true greatness is so closely connected with the happiness of their subjects, as to be inseparable from it. There they will see that while great schemes of conquest have always been productive of extreme suffering to the human race, in their execution, they have often led to

* Machiavel.

ultimate dishonour, and ruin to the monarchs themselves. Herein a pious mind will recognize the goodness of the Almighty, which, notwithstanding the temptations and impediments that, in this probationary state, obstruct the progress, and render difficult the practice of virtue in private life, has yet held out to those, who are endowed with kingly power, a strong inducement to use it for the promotion of their people's happiness, by rendering such designs as tend to the gratification of many vicious appetites, which they are most tempted to indulge, far more difficult of execution, than such as are prompted by benevolent emotions, and have in view the advancement of civil and social happiness.

Thus, projects of conquest and ambition are circumscribed, and obstructed by a thousand inherent and unavoidable difficulties. They are often dependant for their success on the life of a single man, whose death, perhaps, when least expected,

at

at once disconcerts them. Often they depend on what is still more uncertain,—the caprice or humour of an individual. When all is conceived to be flourishing and successful, when the prosperous enterprizer fancies that he is on the very point of gaining the proud summit, to which he has so long aspired ; or at the very moment when it is attained, and he is exulting in the hope of immediate enjoyment,—at once he is dashed to the ground, his triumphs are defeated, his laurels are blasted, and he himself only remains,

To point a moral, or adorn a tale,

a lasting monument of the folly of ambition, and of the uncertainty of all projects of worldly grandeur.

But the Monarch, on the contrary, whose nobler and more virtuous ambition prompts him to employ his superior power in promoting the internal prosperity and comfort of his subjects, is not liable to such defeats.

defeats. His path is plain ; his duty is clear. By a vigilant, prompt, and impartial administration of justice, his object is to secure to the industrious the enjoyment of their honest gains ; by a judicious use of his supreme power, to remove difficulties, and obstructions, out of the way of commercial enterprize, and to facilitate its progress ; to reward and foster ingenuity ; and to encourage and promote the various arts by which civilized societies are distinguished and embellished ; above all, to countenance and favour religion, morality, good order, and all the social and domestic virtues. A monarch, who makes these benevolent ends the objects of his pursuit, will not so easily be disappointed. The reason is obvious ; nothing depends on a single individual. His plans are carrying on through ten thousand channels, and by ten thousand agents, who, while they are all labouring for the promotion of their own peculiar object, are, at the same time, unconsciously performing their function in the great machine

machine of civil society. It is not, if we may change the metaphor, a single plant, perhaps an exotic, in a churlish climate, and an unwilling soil, which, raised with anxious care, a sudden frost may nip, or a sudden blight may wither; but it is the wide-spread vegetation of the meadow, which abundantly springs up in one unvaried face of verdure, beauty, and fertility; While the happy Monarch, whose large and liberal mind has projected and promoted this scene of peaceful industry, has the satisfaction of witnessing the gradual diffusion of comfort; of comfort, which, enlarging with the progress of his plans to their full establishment, has been completed, not like the successful projects of triumphant ambition, in the oppression and misery of subjugated slaves, but in the freedom and happiness of a contented people.

To the above important objects of royal attention, such a Sovereign as we are contemplating, will naturally add a disposition for the promotion of charitable

and religious institutions, as well as of those whose more immediate object is political utility; proportioning, with a judicious discrimination, the measure of support, and countenance, to the respective degree of excellence. To these will be superadded a beneficent patronage to men of genius, learning, and science. Royal patronage will be likely not only to contribute to the carrying of talents into beneficial channels, but may be the means of preventing them from being diverted into such as are dangerous. And when it is received as an universally established principle, that the direction of the best abilities to none but the soundest purposes, is the way to ensure the favour of the prince, will be an additional spur to genius to turn its efforts to the promotion of virtue and of public utility.—Such are the views, such the exertions, such the felicities of a patriot king, of a Christian politician!

CHAP. XXI.

The Importance of Royal Example in promoting Loyalty.—On False Patriotism.—Public Spirit.

A WISE prince will be virtuous, were it only through policy. The measure of his power is the rule of his duty. He who practises virtue and piety himself, not only holds out a broad shelter to the piety and virtue of others, but his example is a living law, efficacious to many of those who would treat written laws with contempt. The good conduct of the prince will make others virtuous ; and the virtuous are always the peaceable. It is the voluptuous, the prodigal, and the licentious who are the needy, the unsettled, and the discontented, who love change, and promote disturbance. If sometimes the affluent, and the independent, swell the catalogue of public disturbers, they will frequently be found
to

to be men of inferior abilities, used by the designing as necessary implements to accomplish their work. The one set furnish mischief, the other means. Sallust has, in four exquisitely chosen words, given, in the character of one innovator, that of almost the whole tribe,—*Alieni appetens, sui profusus*. But allegiance is the fruit of sober integrity ; and fidelity grows on the stock of independent honesty. As there is little public honour, where there is little private principle ; so it is to be feared, there will be little private principle, at least, among young persons of rank, where the throne holds out the example of a contrary conduct.

It is true, that public virtue and public spirit are things, which all men, of all parties, and all characters, equally agree to extol, equally desire to have the credit of possessing. The reputation of patriotism is eagerly coveted by the most opposite characters ; and pursued by the most contradictory means ; by those who sedulously support

the throne and constitution, and by those who labour no less sedulously to subvert them. Even the most factious, those who are governed by the basest selfishness, aspire to the dignity of a character, against which their leading principle and their actual practice constantly militate.

But patriots of this stamp are chiefly on the watch to exemplify their public spirit in their own restless way; they are anxiously looking out for some probable occurrence, which may draw them into notice, and are more eager to fish for fame, in the troubled waters of public commotion, than disposed to live in the quiet exercise of those habitual virtues, which, if general, would preclude the possibility of any commotion at all. These innovating reformers always affect to suppose more virtue in mankind, than they know they shall find, while their own practice commonly exhibits a low standard of that imaginary perfection on which their fallacious reasonings are grounded. There is scarcely any disposition

tion which leads to this factious spirit more than a restless vanity, because it is a temper which induces a man to be making a continual comparison of himself with others. His sense of his own superior merit and inferior fortune, will fill his mind with perpetual competition with the inferior merit and superior fortune of those above him. He will ever prefer a storm in which he may become conspicuous, to a calm in which he is already secure. Such a soi-disant patriot does not feel for the general interests of his country, but only for that portion of it which he himself may have a chance of obtaining. Though a loud declaimer for the privileges of universal man, he really sees no part of the whole circle of human happiness, except that segment which he is carving for himself. He does not rejoice in those plentiful dews of heaven, which are fertilizing the general soil, but in those which fatten his own pastures. "It is not," says the admirable South, "from the common, but

the inclosure, from which he calculates his advantages."

But true public spirit is not the new-born offspring of sudden occasion, nor the incidental fruit of casual emergency, nor the golden apple thrown out to contentious ambition. It is that genuine patriotism, which best prevents disturbance, by discouraging every vice that leads to it. It springs from a combination of disinterestedness, integrity, and content. It is the result of many long cherished domestic charities. Its seminal principles exist in a sober love of liberty, order, law, peace, and justice, the best safeguards of the throne, and the only happiness of the people. Instead of that selfish patriotism which, in ancient Rome, consisted in subverting the comfort of the rest of the world, the public spirit of a British patriot is not only consistent with Christianity, but (maugre the assertion of a wit already quoted *) in a good degree dictated by it.

* Soame Jenyns.

His

His religion, so far from forbidding, even enjoins him to consider himself as such a member of the body politic, such a joint of the great machine, that, remembering the defect of a pin may disconcert a system, he labours to fill up his individual part as assiduously as if the motion of every wheel, the effect of every spring, the success of the whole operation, the safety of the entire community depended on his single conduct. This patriotism evinces itself by sacrifices in the rich, by submission in the poor, by exertions in the able, strong in their energy, but quiet in their operation ; it evinces itself by the sober satisfaction of each in cheerfully filling the station which is assigned him by Providence, instead of aspiring to that which is pointed out by ambition ; by each man performing with conscientious strictness his own proper duty, instead of descanting with misleading plausibility, and unprofitable eloquence, on the duties of other men.

CHAP. XXII.

On the Graces of Deportment.—The Dispositions necessary for Business.—Habits of domestic Life.

“THOSE,” says Lord Bacon, “who are accomplished in the forms of urbanity, are apt to please themselves in it so much, as seldom to aspire to higher virtue.” Notwithstanding the general truth of the maxim, and the high authority by which it comes recommended, yet condescending and gracious manners should have their full share in finishing the royal character; but they should have only their *due* share. They should never be resorted to as a substitute for that worth, of which they are the best decoration. In all the graces of deportment, whatever appears outwardly engaging, should always proceed from something deeper than itself.—The fair fabric, which

is

is seen, must be supported by a solid foundation which is out of sight; the loftiest pyramid must rise from the broadest base; the most beautiful flower from the most valuable root; sweetness of manners must be the effect of benevolence of heart; affability of speech should proceed from a well-regulated temper; a solicitude to oblige should spring from an inward sense of the duty owing to our fellow-creatures; the bounty of the hands must result from the feeling of the heart; the proprieties of conversation, from a sound internal principle; kindness, attention, and all the outward graces, should be the effect of habits and dispositions lying in the mind, and ready to shew themselves in action, whenever the occasion presents itself.

Just views of herself, and of what she owes to the world, of that gentleness which Christianity inculcates, and that graciousness which her station enjoins, will, taking the usual advantages into the account, scarcely fail to produce in the royal pupil a deportment,

ment, at once, dignified and engaging. The firmest substances alone are susceptible of the most exquisite polish, while the meanest materials will admit of being varnished. True fine breeding never betrays any tincture of that vanity, which is the effect of a mind struggling to conceal its faults; nor of that pride, which is not conscious of possessing any. This genuine politeness resulting from illustrious birth, inherent sense, and implanted virtue, will render superfluous the documents of Chesterfield, and the instructions of Castiglione.

But the acquisition of engaging manners, and all the captivating graces of deportment, need less occupy the mind of the royal person, as she will acquire these attractions by a sort of instinct, almost without time or pains. They will naturally be copied from those illustrious examples of grace, ease, and condescending dignity, which fill, and which surround the throne. And she will have the less occasion for looking to remote, or foreign examples,
to

to learn the true arts of popularity, while the illustrious personage who wears the crown, continues to exhibit not only a living pattern by what honest means the warm affections of a people are won, but by what rectitude, piety, and patriotism, they may be preserved, and increased, under every succession of trial, and every vicissitude of circumstance.

Among the habits which it is important for a prince to acquire, there is not one more essential than a love of business. Lord Bacon has, among his Essays, an admirable chapter, both of counsel and caution, respecting dispatch in affairs, which, as it is short and pointed, the royal pupil might commit to memory. He advises to measure dispatch not by the time of sitting to business, but by the advancement of the business itself; and reprobates the affectation of those, who, "to gain the reputation of men of dispatch, are only anxious for the credit of having done a great deal in a little time; and who abbreviate, not by
• con-

contracting, but by cutting off."—On the other hand, procrastination wears out time, and accomplishes nothing. Indistinctness also in the framing of ideas, and confusion in the disorderly disposition of them, perplex business as much as irresolution impedes it. Julius Cæsar was a model in this respect; with all his turbulence of ambition, with all his eagerness of enterprize, with all his celerity of dispatch, his judgment uniformly appears to have been cool and serene; and even in the midst of the most complicated transactions, no perplexity is ever manifest in his conduct, no entanglement in his thoughts, no confusion in his expressions. Hence, we cannot but infer, that an unambiguous clearness in the planning of affairs, a lucid order in arranging, and a persevering, but not precipitate, dispatch in conducting them, are the unequivocal marks of a superior mind.

Yet, though distribution, order, and arrangement, are the soul of business, even these must not be too minute, "for he that
does

does not divide," says the great authority above cited, "will never enter clearly into business, and he who divides too much, will not come out of it clearly."

A Prince should come to the transaction of business, with a prepared, but not with a prejudiced mind: and the mind which is best furnished for the concern which it is about to investigate, while it will be least liable to be drawn aside by persuasion, will be most open to truth, and most disposed to yield to conviction, because it will have already weighed the arguments, and balanced the difficulties.

A great statesman of that nation to which we are rather apt to ascribe steadiness than rapidity, has bequeathed a valuable lesson to princes for the dispatch of business. It is well known, that De Wit assigned it as the chief reason why he had himself been enabled to prosecute such a multiplicity of concerns so easily, was *by always doing one thing at a time.*

It

It is, therefore important, not only fully to possess the mind with the affair which is under consideration, but to bestow on it an undivided attention, an application which cannot be diverted by irrelevant or inferior objects; and to possess a firmness which cannot be shaken from its purpose by art or flattery; cautions the more necessary, as we are assured by a penetrating observer, that even the strong mind of Elizabeth was not always proof against such attacks.—One of the secretaries of this great queen never came to her to sign bills, that he did not first take care to engage her in deep discourse about other weighty business, that, by thus pre-occupying her mind, he might draw off her attention from the bills to which he wanted her signature.

For the private habits of life, and propriety of conduct to those around her, queen Mary, as described by bishop Burnet * and

* See especially bishop Burnet's Essay on queen Mary.

Fowler, seems to have been a model. Her goodness was the most unostentatious, her gentleness the most unaffected, her piety the most inwoven into her habits, her charity the best principled, and her generosity the most discriminating! Vanity and self-love seem to have been not merely outwardly repressed from a sense of decorum, but to have been inwardly extinguished; and she did not want the veil of art to conceal faults which were not working within. She seems to have united consummate discretion, with the most conscientious sincerity. She could deny, says her admiring biographer, the most earnest solicitations, with a true firmness, when she thought the person for whom they were made, did not merit them. She possessed one quality of peculiar value in her station, a gentle, but effectual method of discouraging calumny. If any indulged a spirit of censoriousness in her presence, continues he, she would ask them, if they had read archbishop Tillotson's sermon

sermon on Evil-speaking ? or give them some other pointed, but delicate reproof.

Princes should never forget, that where sincerity is expected, freedom must be allowed ; and, that they who shew themselves displeased at truth, must not be surprized if they never hear it. In all their intercourse, they should not only be habituated to expect from others, but to practise themselves, the most simple veracity ; they should no more employ flattery, than exact it. It will be necessary for them to bear in mind, that such is the selfishness of the human heart, that we are not disinterested in our very praises ; and that, in excessive commendation, we commonly consider ourselves more than the person we commend. It is often rather a disguised effect of our own vanity, than any real admiration of the person we extol. That flattery which appears so liberal is, in fact, one of the secret artifices of self-love ; it looks generous, but it is in reality covetous ;

and praise is not so much a free gift, as a mercenary commerce, for which we hope to receive, in return, more than an equivalent.

Is there not something far more cunning than noble in that popular art, which Pliny recommends, "to be liberal of praise to another for any thing in which you yourself excel?"—The motive is surely selfish, that whether you deserve it or not, you may thus, either way, be certain of securing the superiority to yourself.—If censure wants the tenderness of charity to make it useful, praise requires the modesty of truth, and the sanctity of justice to render it safe. It is observable, that in the sacred Scriptures, which we should do well always to consult as our model, though there is sometimes simple commendation, yet there is no excessive praise, nor ever the slightest tincture of exaggeration.

But there is a fault, the direct opposite to flattery, which should with equal vigi-

lance be guarded against. There is nothing which more effectually weans attachment, and obstructs popularity, than the indulgence of intemperate speech, and petulant wit. And they who, in very exalted stations, unfortunately feel a propensity to impetuosity or sarcasm, would do well, if they will not repress the feeling (which would be the shortest way), not to let it break out in pointed sentences, or cutting sayings, sharp enough to give pain, and short enough to be remembered. It has this double disadvantage; every wound made by a royal hand is mortal to the feelings of those on whom it is inflicted; and every heart which is thus wounded, is alienated. Besides, it is an evil, which "gathers strength by going." The sayings of Princes are always repeated, and they are not always repeated faithfully. Lord Bacon records several instances of Sovereigns who ruined themselves by this sententious indiscretion. The mischief of concise sayings,

sayings, he observes, is that "they are darts, supposed to be shot from their secret intentions, while long discourses are flat, less noticed, and little remembered."

CHAP. XXIII.

On the Choice of Society.—Sincerity the Bond of familiar Intercourse. — Liberality. — Instances of Ingratitude in Princes.—On raising the Tone of Conversation. — And of Manners.

PRINCES can never fall into a more fatal error, than when, in mixing with dishonourable society, they fancy, either that their choice can confer merit, or their presence compensate for the want of it. It is, however, sometimes very difficult for them to discover the real character of those around them, because there may be a kind of conspiracy to keep them in the dark. But there is one principle of selection, which will in general direct them well, in the choice of their companions, that of chusing persons, who, in their ordinary habits, and in selecting the companions of their own hours of relaxation, shew their

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regard

regard for morality and virtue. From such men as these, Princes may more reasonably expect to hear the language of truth. Such persons will not be naturally led to connive at the vices of their master, in order to justify their own ; they have no interest in being dishonest.

The people are not unnaturally led to form their judgment of the real principles and character of the prince, from the conduct and manners of his companions and favourites. Were not the subjects of the unhappy Charles I. in some degree excusable, for not doing full justice to the piety and moral worth, which really belonged to his character, when they saw that those who were his most strenuous advocates, were, in general, avowedly profligate and profane ?—If a monarch have the especial happiness of possessing a friend, let him be valued as the most precious of all his possessions. Let him be encouraged to discharge the best office of friendship, by

finding, that the frankest reproofs, instead of generating a formality too fatally indicative of decaying affection, are productive, even when they may be conceived to be misplaced, of warmer returns of cordiality.

But kings, whether actual or expectant, must not hope, in general, to find this honest frankness. They must not expect to have their opinions contriverted, or their errors exposed directly or openly. They should, therefore, accustom themselves to hear and understand the still small voice, in which any disapprobation will be likely to be conveyed; they should use themselves to catch a hint, and to profit from an analogy; they should be on the watch to discover the sense which is entertained of their own principles or conduct, by observing the language which is used concerning similar principles and conduct in others. They must consider themselves as lying under special disadvantages, in respect to the discovery of truth, wherever they are themselves

themselves concerned ; and must, therefore, strive to become possessed of it, with proportionate diligence and caution.

If an insinuating favourite find it more advantageous to himself to flatter than to counsel his Prince, counsel will be withheld, and obsequiousness will be practised. The Prince, in return, will conclude himself to be always in the right, when he finds that he is never opposed ; and the remembrance of his faults, and the duty of correcting them, will be obliterated in the constant approbation which he is confident of receiving.

Discretion is a quality so important in a royal person, that he should early be taught the most absolute control over his own mind. He should learn, that no momentary warmth of feeling should ever betray a Prince into the disclosure of any thing which wisdom or duty requires him to conceal. But, while he is thus vigilantly careful not to commit himself, he should seldom

appear to entertain any distrust of those, in whom prudence forbids him to confide. There is scarcely a more unquestionable evidence of sound sense and self-possession, than never to seem burthened with a secret of one's own; nor a surer mark of true politeness, than not to pry curiously into that of another. "The perfection of behaviour," says Livy, though he said it on another occasion, "is for a man (he might have said a Prince) to retain his own dignity, without intruding on the liberty of another."

Those who have solicitations to make, should never have reason given them to suspect, that they can work their way to the royal favour by flatteries which soothe rather than by truths which enlighten. Above all, a Prince should avoid discovering such weaknesses as may encourage suitors to expect success in their applications, by such a spirit of accommodation, such silly compliments, servile sacrifices, and
*unworthy

unworthy adulation, as are derogatory to his understanding, and disgraceful to his character *.

A royal

* It would seem superfluous to guard the royal mind against such petty dangers, did not history furnish so many instances of their ill effects. How much the weak vanity of King James I. laid him open to these despicable flatteries, we have some curious specimens in a letter of Lord Thomas Howard to Sir John Harrington, from which we extract the following passage. In advising his friend how to conduct himself in the king's presence, in order to advance his fortune, after some other counsel, he adds, "Touch but lightly on religion. Do not of yourself say, "this is good or bad;" but if it were your majesty's good opinion, I myself should think so. In private discourse, the king seldom speaketh of any man's temper, discretion, or good virtues; so meddle not at all; but find out a clue to guide you to the heart, most delightful to his mind.— I will advise one thing; the roan Jennet, whereon the king rideth every day, must not be forgotten to be praised, and the good furniture above all. What lost a great man much notice the other day, a noble did come in suit of a place, and saw the king mounting the roan, delivered his petition, which was heeded and read, but no answer given. The noble departed, and came to court the next day,

A royal person should early be taught that it is no small part of wisdom and virtue to repel improper requests. But, while firm in the principle as Christian duty requires, it is no violation of that duty to be as gentle in the expression, as Christian kindness demands; never forgetting the well-known circumstance, that of two sovereigns of the house of Stuart, one *refused* favours in a more gracious manner than the other *granted* them. It is, therefore, not enough that a Prince should acquire the disposition to confer favours, he should also

“ day, and got no answer again. The Lord Treasurer was then pressed to move the king’s pleasure touching the petition. When the king was asked for answer thereto, he said, in some wrath, “ Shall a king give heed to a dirty paper, when the beggar noticeth not his gilt stirrups?” Now it fell out, that the king had new furniture, when the noble saw him in the court yard, but he being overcharged with confusion, passed by admiring the dressing of the horse. Thus, good knight, our noble failed in his suit.”

Nugæ Antiquæ.
cultivatæ

cultivate the talent. He should not only know how and when to commend, and how and when to bestow, but also how and when to refuse ; and should carefully study the important and happy art of discriminating between those whose merit deserves favour, and those whose necessities demand relief. It should be established into a habit, to make no vague promises, raise no false hopes, and disappoint no hopes which have been fairly raised.

Princes should never shelter their meaning under ambiguous expressions ; nor use any of those equivocal or general phrases, which may be interpreted any way, and which, either from their ambiguity or indeterminate looseness, will be translated into that language, which happens to suit the hopes or the fears of the petitioner. It should ever be remembered, that a hasty promise, given to gain time, to save appearances, to serve a pressing emergency, or to avoid a present importunity, and not performed when the occasion occurs, does

as much harm to the promiser in a political, as in a moral view. For the final disappointment of such raised expectations will do an injury more than equivalent to any temporary advantage, which could be derived from making the promise. Even the wiser worldly politicians have been aware of this. Cardinal Richelieu, overbearing as he was, still preserved the attachment of his adherents, by never violating his engagements; while Mazarin, whose vices were of a baser strain, was true to no man, and, therefore, attached no man. There was no set of people on whom he could depend, because there was none whom he had not deceived. Though his less elevated capacity, and more moderate ambition, enabled him to be less splendidly mischievous than his predecessor, yet his bad faith and want of honour, his falsehood and low cunning, as they prevented all men from confiding in him during his life, so have they consigned his memory to perpetual detestation.

In

In habituating Princes to delight to confer favours on the deserving, it should be remembered, that where it is right to bestow them at all, it is also right not to wait till they are solicited. But, while the royal person is taught to consider munificence as a truly princely virtue, yet an exact definition of what true, and especially what royal, munificence is, will be one of the most salutary lessons he can learn. Liberality is one of the brightest stars in the whole constellation of virtues; but it shines most benignantly, when it does not depend on its own solitary lustre, but blends its rays with the confluent radiance of the surrounding lights. The individual favour must not intrench on any superior claim; no bounty must infringe on its neighbouring virtues, justice, or discretion; nor must it take its character from its outwardly resembling vices, ostentation, vanity, or profusion. Real merit of every kind should be remunerated; but those who possess merits foreign from their own profession, though

though they should be still rewarded, should not be remunerated out of the resources of that profession. Nor should talents, however considerable, which are irrelevant to the profession, be made a motive for placing a man in it. Louis XIV. chose Father la Chaise for his confessor, because he understood something of medals!

There is an idea of beautiful humanity suggested to Princes in the Spectator *, in a fictitious account of the emperor Pharamond, who made it his refreshment from the toils of business, and the fatigues of ceremony, to pass an hour or two in the apartment of his favourite, in giving audience to the claims of the meritorious, and in drying the tears of the afflicted. The entrance by which the sorrowful obtained access, was called THE GATE OF THE UNHAPPY. A munificent prince may, in some degree, realize this idea.—And what proportions in architecture, what magni-

* Number 84.

ficence in dimensions, what splendour of decoration, can possibly adorn a royal palace so gloriously, as such *a gate of the unhappy?*

A royal person should be early taught, by an invincible love of justice, and a constant exercise of kindness, feeling, and gratitude, to invalidate that maxim, that, in a court, *les absens et les mourans ont toujours tort*. He should possess the generosity, not to expect his favourites to sacrifice their less fortunate friends in order to make their court to him. Examples of this ungenerous selfishness, should be commented on in reading. Madame de Maintenon sacrificed the exemplary Cardinal de Noailles, and the elegant and virtuous Racine, to the unjust resentment of the king, and refused to incur the risk of displeasing him by defending her oppressed and injured friends.

We have already mentioned the remuneration of services.—In a reign where all was baseness, it is not easy to fix on a particular instance; else the neglect manifested by Charles II. towards the author of *Hulibras*,

bras, carries on it a stain of peculiar ingratitude. It is the more unpardonable, because the monarch had taste enough to appreciate, and frequently to quote with admiration the wit of Butler : a wit not transiently employed to promote his pleasure, or to win his favour ; but loyally and laboriously exercised in composing one of the most ingenious and original, and unquestionably, the most learned poem in the English language. A poem, which, independently of its literary merit, did more to advance the royal cause, by stigmatizing with unparalleled powers of irony and ridicule, the fanaticism and hypocrisy of the usurper's party, than had perhaps been effected by all the historians, moralists, divines, and politicians put together. It is not meant, however, to give unqualified praise to this poem. From the heavy charges of levity, and even of prophaneness, Hudibras cannot be vindicated ; and a scrupulous sovereign would have wished that his cause had been served by better means. Such a sovereign was

was not Charles. So far from it, may it not be feared, that these grievous blemishes, instead of alienating the king from the poet, would too probably have been an additional motive for his approbation of the work, and consequently, could not have been his reason for neglecting the author *?

A somewhat similar imputation of ingratitude towards Philip de Comines, though on different grounds of service, detracts not a little from the far more estimable character of Louis XII. As it was this monarch's honourable boast on another occasion, that the king of France never resented the injuries offered to the duke of Orleans, it should have been

* Dryden also materially served the royal cause by his admirable poem of Absalom and Achitophel, which determined the conquest of the Tories, after the exclusion parliaments. But, Dryden was a profligate, whom no virtuous monarch could patronize. Though, when a prince refuses to remunerate the actual services of a first-rate genius, because he is an unworthy man, it would be acting consistently to withhold all favour from those who have only the vices without the talents.

equally his care, that the services performed for the one should never have been forgotten by the other.

To confer dignity and useful elegance on the hours of social pleasure and relaxation, is a talent of peculiar value, and one of which an highly educated prince is in more complete possession, than any other human being. He may turn even the passing topics of the day to good account, by collecting the general opinion; and may gain clearer views of ordinary events and opinions, by hearing them faithfully related, and fairly canvassed. Instead of falling in with the prevailing taste for levity and trifles, he may, without the smallest diminution of cheerfulness or wit in the conversation, insensibly divert its current into the purest channels. The standard of society may be gracefully, and almost imperceptibly, raised by exciting the attention to questions of taste, morals, ingenuity, and literature. Under such auspicious influence, every talent will not only be elicited, but

directed to its true end. Every taste for what is excellent will be awakened ; every mental faculty, and moral feeling, will be quickened ; and the royal person, by the urbanity and condescension with which he thus calls forth abilities to their best exercise, will seem to have infused new powers into his honoured and delighted guests.

A Prince is “ the maker of manners ;” and as he is the model of the court, so is the court the model of the metropolis, and the metropolis of the rest of the kingdom. He should carefully avail himself of the rare advantage which his station affords, of giving, through this widely extended sphere, the tone to virtue, as well as to manners. He should bear in mind, that high authority becomes a most pernicious power, when, either by example or countenance, it is made the instrument of extending and establishing corruptions.

We have given an instance of the powerful effect of example in Princes, in the influence which the *sincerity* of

Henry IV. of France had on those about him. An instance equally striking may be adduced of the eagerness with which the same monarch was imitated in his *vices*. Henry was passionately addicted to gaming, and the contagion of the king's example unhappily spread with the utmost rapidity, not only through the whole court, but the whole kingdom.

And when, not gaming only, but other irregularities ;—when whatever is notoriously wrong, by being thus countenanced and protected, becomes thoroughly established and fashionable, few will be ashamed of doing wrong. Every thing, indeed, which the court reprobates will continue to be stigmatized ; but unhappily, every thing which it countenances will cease to be disreputable. And that which was accounted infamous under a virtuous, would cease to be disreputable under a corrupt reign. For, while vice is discouraged by the highest authority, notwithstanding it may be practised, it will still be accounted disho-

dishonourable ; but when that discountenance is withdrawn, shame and dishonour will no longer attend it. The contamination will spread wider, and descend lower; and purity will insensibly lose ground, when even notorious deviations from it are no longer attended with disgrace.

Anne of Austria has been flattered by historians, for having introduced a more refined politeness into the court of France, and for having multiplied its amusements. We hardly know whether this remark is meant to convey praise or censure. It is certain, that her cardinal, and his able predecessor, had address enough to discover, that the most effectual method of establishing a despotic government, was to amuse the people, by encouraging a spirit of dissipation, and sedulously providing objects for its gratification. These dextrous politicians knew, that to promote a general passion for pleasure and idleness, would, by engaging the minds of the people, render them less dangerous observers, both of the

ministers and of their sovereigns. This project, which had perhaps only a temporary view, had lasting consequences. The national character was so far changed by its success, that the country seems to have been brought to the unanimous conclusion, that it was pleasanter to amuse, than to defend themselves.

It is also worth remarking, that even where the grossest licentiousness may not be pursued, an unbounded passion for exquisite refinement in pleasure, and for the luxurious gratification of taste, is attended with more deep and serious mischiefs than are perhaps intended. It stagnates higher energies; it becomes itself the paramount principle, and gradually, by debasing the heart, both disinclines and disqualifies it for nobler pursuits. The court of Louis XIV. exhibited a striking proof of this degrading perfection. The princes of the blood were so enchanted with its fascinating splendours, that they ignominiously submitted to the loss of all power, importance, and influence
in

in the state, because, with a view to estrange them from situations of real usefulness and dignity, they were graciously permitted to preside in matters of taste and fashion, and to become the supreme arbiters in dress, spectacles, and decoration *.

* It is humiliating to the dignity of a Prince, when his subjects believe that they can recommend themselves to his favour, by such low qualifications as a nice attention to personal appearance, and modish attire. Of this we shall produce an instance from another passage of Lord Thomas Howard's Letters to Sir John Harrington. "The king," says he, "doth admire good fashion in cloaths. I pray you give good heed hereunto. I would wish you to be well trimmed; get a good jerkin well bordered, and not too short: the king saith, he liketh a flowing garment. Be sure it be not all of one sort, but diversely coloured; the collar falling somewhat down, and your ruff well stiffened, and bushy. We have lately had many gallants who have failed in their suit for want of due observance in these matters. The king is nicely heedful of such points, and dwelleth on good looks and handsome accoutrements."

Nugæ Antiquæ.

CHAP. XXIV.

On the Art of moral Calculation, and making a true Estimate of Things and Persons.

A ROYAL person should early be taught to act on that maxim of one of the ancients, that the chief misfortunes of men arise from their never having learned *the true art of calculation*. This moral art should be employed to teach him, how to weigh the comparative value of things; and to adjust their respective claims; assigning to each that due proportion of time and thought to which each will, on a fair valuation, be found to be entitled. It will also teach the habit of setting the concerns of time, in contrast with those of eternity. This last is not one of those speculative points, on which persons may differ without danger, but one, in which an
erroneous

erroneous calculation involves inextricable misfortune.

It is prudent to have a continual reference not only to the value of the object, but also to the probability there is of attaining it; not only to see that it is of sufficient importance to justify our sollicitude; but also to take care, that designs of remote issue, and projects of distant execution, do not supersede present and actual duties. Providence, by setting so narrow limits to life itself, in which these objects are to be pursued, has clearly suggested to us, the impropriety of forming schemes, so disproportionate in their dimensions, to our contracted sphere of action. Nothing but this doctrine of moral calculation, will keep up in the mind a constant sense of that future reckoning, which, even to a private individual, is of unspeakable moment: but, which, to a Prince, whose responsibility is so infinitely greater, increases to a magnitude, the full sum of which, the human mind would in vain attempt to estimate.

This

This principle will afford the most salutary check to those projects of remote vain-glory, and posthumous ambition, of which, in almost every instance, it is difficult to pronounce, whether they have been more idle, or more calamitous.

History, fertile as it is in similar lessons, does not furnish a more striking instance of the mischiefs of erroneous calculation, than in the character of Alexander. How falsely did he estimate the possible exertions of one man, and the extent of human life, when, in the course of his reign, which eventually proved a short one, he resolved to change the face of the world; to conquer its kingdoms, to enlighten its ignorance, and to redress its wrongs! a chimera, indeed, but a glorious chimera, had he not, at the same time, and to the last hour of his life, indulged passions inconsistent with his own resolutions, and subversive of his own schemes. His thirty-third year put a period to projects, for which many ages would have been insufficient! and the vanity

nity of his ambition forms a forcible contrast to the grandeur of his designs.—His gigantic empire, acquired by unequalled courage, ambition, and success, did not gradually decay by the lapse of time; it did not yield to the imperious control of strange events, and extraordinary circumstances, which it was beyond the wisdom of man to foresee, or the power of man to resist; but naturally, but instantly, on the death of the Conqueror, it was at once broken in pieces, all his schemes were in a moment abolished, and even the dissolution of his own paternal inheritance was speedily accomplished, by the contests of his immediate successors.

But we need not look back to ancient Greece for proofs of the danger of erroneous calculation, while Louis XIV. occupies the page of history. This descendant of fifty kings, after a triumphant reign of sixty years, having, like Alexander, been flattered with the name of *the great*, and having,

ing, doubtless, like him, projected to reign after his decease, was not dead an hour, before his will was cancelled; a will not made in secret, and, like some of his former acts, annulled by its own inherent injustice, but publicly known, and generally approved by Princes of the blood, counsellors, and parliaments. This royal will was set aside with less ceremony, than would have been shewn, in this country, to the testament of the meanest individual. All formalities were forgotten; all decencies trodden under foot. This decree of the new executive power became, in a moment, as absolute as that of the monarch, now so contemptuously treated, had lately been. No explanation was given, no arguments were heard, no objections examined. That sovereign was totally and instantly forgotten—

—whose word

Might yesterday have stood against the world;
And none so poor to do him reverence.

The plans of Cesar Borgia were so ably laid, that he thought he had put himself
out

out of the reach of Providence. It was the boast of this execrable politician, that he had, by the infallible rules of a wise and foreseeing policy, so surely laid the immutable foundations of his own lasting greatness, that of the several possibilities which he had calculated, not one could shake the stability of his fortune. If the Pope, his father, should live, his grandeur was secure; if he died, he had, by his interest, secured the next election. But this deep schemer had forgotten to take his own mortality into the account.—He did not calculate on that sickness, which would remove him from the scene, where his presence was necessary to secure these events; he did not foresee, that, when his father died, his mortal enemy, and not his creature, would succeed, and, by succeeding, would defeat every thing.—Above all, he did not calculate, that, when he invited to his palace nine cardinals, for whose supper he had prepared a deadly poison, in order to get
their

their wealth into his own hands—he did not,
I say, foresee, that

——he but taught

Bloody instructions, which being taught, return
To plague the inventor—

He did not think that *literally*,

——Even-handed justice

Would give th' ingredients of the poison'd chalice
To his own lips.

He had left out of his calculation, that the pope, his father, would perish by the very plot which was employed to enrich him ; while he, Borgia himself, with the mortal venom in his veins, should only escape to drag on a life of meanness, and misery, in want, and in prison ; with the loss of his boundless wealth and power, losing all those adherents which that wealth and power had attracted ✓

It is of the last importance, that persons of high condition should be preserved from entering on their brilliant career with false principles, false views, and false maxims. It is of the last importance, to teach them

not

not to confound splendour with dignity, justice with success, merit with prosperity, voluptuousness with happiness, refinement in luxury with pure taste, deceit with sagacity, suspicion with penetration, prodigality with a liberal spirit, honour with Christian principle, Christian principle with fanaticism, or conscientious strictness with hypocrisy.

Young persons possess so little clearness in their views, so little distinctness in their perceptions, and are so much inclined to prefer the suggestions of a warm fancy to the sober deductions of reason, that, in their pursuit of glory and celebrity, they are perpetually liable to take up with false way-marks; and where they have some general good intentions respecting the end, to defeat their own purpose by a misapplication of means; so that, very often, they do not so much err through the seduction of the senses, as by accumulating false maxims into a sort of system, on which they afterward act through life.

One

One of the first lessons, that should be inculcated on the great, is, that God has not sent us into this world to give us consummate happiness, but to train us to those habits which lead to it. High rank lays the mind open to strong temptations; the highest rank to the strongest. The seducing images of luxury and pleasure, of splendour and of homage, of power and independence, are too seldom counteracted by the only adequate preservative, a religious education. The world is too generally entered upon as a scene of pleasure, instead of trial; as a theatre of amusement, not of action. The high born are taught to enjoy the world at an age when they should be learning to know it; and to grasp the prize, when they should be exercising themselves for the combat. They consequently look for the sweets of victory, when they should be enduring the hardness of the conflict.

From some of these early corruptions, a young Princess will be preserved, by that
 very

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very supereminent greatness, which, in other respects, has its dangers. Her exalted station, by separating her from miscellaneous society, becomes her protection from many of its maxims and practices. From the dangers of her own peculiar situation she should be guarded, by being early taught to consider power and influence, not as exempting her from the difficulties of life, or ensuring to her a larger portion of its pleasures, but as engaging her in a peculiarly extended sphere of duties, and infinitely increasing the demands on her fortitude and vigilance.

The right formation of her judgment will much assist in her acquisition of right practical habits; and the art of making a just estimate of men and things, will be one of the most useful lessons she will have to learn. Young persons, in their views of the world, are apt to make a false estimate of character, something in the way in which the Roman mob decided on that of Cæsar. They are dazzled with the glitter

of a shining action, without scrutinizing the character, or suspecting the motive of the actor. From the scene which followed Cæsar's death, they may learn a salutary lesson. How easily did the insinuating Anthony persuade the people, that the man who had actually robbed them of their liberty, and of those privileges in defence of which their ancestors had shed their best blood, was a prodigy of disinterested generosity, because he had left them permission to walk in his pleasure-grounds!—the bequest of a few drachmas to each, was sufficient to convince these shallow reasoners, that their deceased benefactor, was the most disinterested, and least selfish, of mankind. In this popular act they forgot, that he had ravaged Greece, depopulated Gaul, plundered Asia, and subverted the commonwealth!

The same class of ardent and indiscriminating judges will pass over, in the popular character of our fifth Henry, the profligacy of his morals, and the ambition of his temper,

temper, and think only of his personal bravery, and his splendid successes. They will forget, in the conqueror of Agincourt, the abettor of superstition and cruelty, and the unfeeling persecutor of the illustrious Lord Cobham.

But, in no instance has a false judgment been more frequently made, than in the admired and attractive character of Henry IV. of France. The frankness of his manners, the gallantry of his spirit, and the generosity of his temper, have concurred to unite the public judgment in his favour, and to obtain too much indulgence to his unsteady principles, and his libertine conduct. But the qualities which insure popularity too seldom stand the scrutiny of truth. Born with talents and dispositions to engage all hearts, Henry was defective in that radical principle of conscience, which is the only foundation of all true virtue. The renunciation of his religion for the crown of France, which was thought a master-stroke of policy, which

was recommended by statesmen, justified by divines, and even *approved by Sully*, was probably, as most acts of mere worldly policy often eventually prove to be, the source of his subsequent misfortunes. Had he preferred his religion to the crown of France, he had not fallen the victim of a fanatical assassin. Had he limited his desires to the kingdom of Navarre, when that of France could only be obtained by the sacrifice of his conscience, the heroism of his character would then have been unequivocal, and his usefulness to mankind might have been infinitely extended. Nor is it impossible, that those who urged the condition might, by the steady perseverance of his refusal, have been induced to relinquish it; and French protestantism, from his conscientious adherence to its principles, might have derived such a strength, as soon to have made it paramount in the state: an event which would probably have saved Europe from those horrors and agitations, with which the late century closed, and the present has commenced,

menced, the termination of which remains awfully concealed in the yet unrolled volume of eternal Providence.

How much more solid, though neither sung by the poet, nor immortalized by the sculptor *, was the virtue of his illustrious mother, honourably introducing, with infinite labour and hazard, the reformation into her small territory! Nothing, says her warm eulogist, bishop Burnet, was wanting to make the queen of Navarre perfect, but a larger dominion. "She not only reformed her court, but her whole principality, to such a degree, that the golden age seems to have returned under her, or rather Christianity appeared again, with its pristine purity and lustre. Nor is there one single abatement to be made her. *Only her sphere was narrow.*"—But is not this to make greatness depend too much on

* Henry IV. was chosen by Voltaire for the Hero of this Epic poem, and his statue was for a long time respected in France, when those of other kings were destroyed.

extrinsic accident? That sphere is large enough which is rounded with perfection. A Christian queen during her troubled life! A martyr in her exemplary death, hastened, as is too probable, by the black devices of one, as much the opprobrium, as she herself was the glory of queens; the execrable plotter of the massacre of Saint Bartholomew! Happy for Catherine di Medici, and for France, of which she was regent during the minority of three kings, had her sphere been as contracted as was that of Jane of Navarre*!

For

* Nature, perhaps, never produced a more perfect contrast, than these two contemporary queens. The intellectual subtilty of Catherine's vices more resembled those of an infernal spirit, than of a corrupt woman. She had an exquisite genius for crimes. The arts she employed against those, whose destruction she meditated, were varied and applied with the nicest appropriation to their case and character; and her success was proportioned to her skill. Power, riches, pleasures, were the baits which she held out, with exact discrimination, to different men, according as their tempers inclined them to either. Her deep knowledge of mankind she converted to the purpose
of

For want of having learned to make a just estimate of the relative value of actions,

Louis

of alluring, betraying, and destroying all, against whom she had designs: and she had the ingenuity to ruin every one in his own way. She not only watched the vices and weaknesses, but the very virtues of men, in order to work with them to their destruction. The excess of a good quality, the elevation of a virtue, was in her hands, a better implement for working the ruin of its possessor, than even his faults. Her dissimulation was so exquisite, her patience in evil so persevering, that no time appeared too long for nourishing impious projects, and ripening them to perfection. Aware, at length, that that rare combination of deceit and cruelty which met in her character was detected; in order to complete the destruction of the protestants more signally, her son, a puppet in her hands, was taught to foster and care for them. Two years did this pernicious Italian brood over this plot *. Its dire catastrophe who does not know? Queen Jane was poisoned, as a prologue to this bloody tragedy, a sovereign to whom even the bigotted historians of the popish communion concur in ascribing all that was elegant, accomplished, and pure in woman, with all that was wise, heroic, learned, and intrepid in man!

* For a more detailed character of Catherine, see the Life of Agrippa D'Aubigné.

Louis XIV., while he was laying Flanders waste, and depopulating whole provinces, probably persuaded himself, that he was actuated by pure charity and love of the people, because he carried in his military caleche some bags of bread and money, which he distributed, as he passed, to the famished peasantry; beings, whose hunger was caused by his ambition; hunger which the ostentatious distribution of a few loaves and livres could relieve but for a moment. He might have given them peace, and saved his bread. He should have reflected, that the most munificent charities of a Prince, commendable as they are in themselves, can be only local and partial; and are almost nothing, in the way of benefit, compared with a deliverance, which it was in his power to have granted them, from the miseries of war. In a Prince, to love peace, is to be charitable on a grand scale.—The evils which he personally relieves, in consequence of their presenting themselves to his senses, highly as that species of bounty should be rated,

ESTIMATE OF THINGS AND PERSONS. 23

rated, must be out of all proportion few, compared with those which never meet his eyes. If, by compassionating the one, he soothes his own feelings, while he forgets the other, only because they are too remote to come in contact with these feelings, his charity is little better than self-love.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXV.

On Erroneous Judgment.—Character of Queen Christina of Sweden.—Comparison of Christina with Alfred.

NOTHING leads more to false estimates than our suffering that natural desire of happiness, congenial to the human heart, to mislead us by its eagerness. The object in itself is not only natural, but laudable; but the steps which are supposed to lead to it, when ill regulated, never attain the end. Vice, of whatever kind, leads to inevitable misery; yet, through a false calculation, even while happiness is intended, vice is pursued. The voluptuous will not be persuaded to set bounds to their indulgencies. Thus they commonly destroy both health of body, and peace of mind; yet the most voluptuous never *intend* to be miserable. What a necessity hence arises, for early
infusing

infusing right principles, and training to safe and temperate habits, when even the very desire of happiness, if left merely to its instinctive movements, is almost certain to plunge its votary into final and irremediable wretchedness !

But in no instance is the defective judgment which leads to false estimates, more to be regretted, than in the case of those who apply themselves to pursuits, and affect habits foreign from their station ; who spend their season of improvement in cultivating talents, which they can rarely bring into exercise, to the neglect of those which they are peculiarly called to acquire ; who run out of their proper road in pursuit of false fame, while they renounce the solid glory of a real, an attainable, and an appropriate renown.

The danger of a Prince often becomes, in this respect, the greater, because, while he sees a path open before him, suppose in the case of the fine arts, by which he beholds others rising into universal notice
and

and celebrity, he feels, perhaps, a natural propensity to the same pursuits, and a consciousness of being able to excel in them. Meanwhile, even his weakest efforts are flattered by those around him, as the sure presages of excellence; and he is easily led to believe, that if he will condescend to enter the lists, he is certain to attain the palm of victory. When we consider the amount of the temptation, we should be almost ready to forgive the Emperor Nero, had it been only in displaying his musical or theatrical talents, that he had departed from the line of rectitude. But to see a Roman Emperor travelling through Greece in the character of an artist, in order to extort the applauses of a people eminent for their taste, was an indication of farther evils. The infatuation remained to his last hour; for, in his dying moments, instead of thinking how Rome must rejoice to be rid of such a master, he only wondered how the world could submit to the loss of such a performer.

It

It is one of the many evils which result from indulging such misplaced propensities, that it produces a fatal forgetfulness of all the proper duties of a sovereign, and of his legitimate sphere of emulation. Having once eaten of the forbidden fruit of this meretricious praise, he becomes fonder of the relish,—his taste is corrupted,—his views are lowered,—his ambition is contracted; and indolence conspires with vanity, in perpetuating his delusion, and in making him take up with pursuits, and gratifications, far below the level of his high original.

For a Prince, who has formed a just estimate of his own exalted station, will ever bear in mind, that as its rank, its rights, and its privileges, are all of a kind peculiar to itself, so also must be its honours. Providence has laid open to a Prince an elevated and capacious field of glory, from which subjects must be ever excluded, by the very circumstances of their civil condition. A Prince will but degrade himself,

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when

when he descends from this vantage ground, which he naturally occupies, to mix in the competitions of ordinary men. He engages in a contest in which, though failure may disgrace, success cannot do him honour. Monarchs, therefore, would do well to remember, and to improve upon the principle of the dignified reply of Alexander, who being asked whether he would not engage in the competition for the prize at the Olympic games, answered,—"Yes,—if KINGS are to be my competitors." Nor perhaps would the high-minded answer of Alcibiades be unbecoming in a Prince,—“It is not for me to give, but to receive delight.”

Ever, therefore, let those whose important duty it is, to superintend the education of a royal person, labour to fix in him a just conception of the *proprieties* of his princely character. Let them teach him how to regulate all his judgments and pursuits, by the rule of reason, by a sound and serious estimate of his own condition, and
of

of the *peculiar* duties, excellencies, and honours, which belong to it, on grounds no less of wisdom than of virtue.

We know not how better to illustrate the nature and confirm the truth of these remarks, than by adducing, as an eminent instance of a contrary kind, the character of Queen Christina of Sweden, the memorable tale of her false judgment, and perverted ambition.—Christina, a woman whose whole character was one mass of contradictions! That same defect in judgment, which, after she had, with vast cost and care, collected some of the finest pictures in Rome, led her to spoil their proportions, by clipping them with sheers, till they fitted her apartment, appeared in all she did. It led her, while she thirsted for adulation, to renounce, in abdicating her crown, the means of exacting it. It led her to read almost all books; without digesting any, to make them the theme of her discourse, but not the ground of her conduct. It led her, fond as she was of

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magni-

magnificence, to reduce herself to such a state of indigence, as robbed her of the power of enjoying it. And it was the same inconsistency, which made her court the applause of men, eminent for their religious character, while she valued herself on being an avowed infidel.

This royal wanderer roamed from country to country, and from court to court, for the poor purpose of entering the lists with wits, or of discussing knotty points with philosophers: proud of aiming to be the rival of Vossius, when her true merit would have consisted in being his protector. Absurdly renouncing the solid glory of governing well, for the sake of hunting after an empty phantom of liberty, which she never enjoyed, and vainly grasping at the shadow of fame, which she never attained.

Nothing is right, which is not in its right place. Disorderly wit, even disorderly virtues, lose much of their natural value:

There

There is an exquisite symmetry and proportion in the qualities of a well-ordered mind. An ill-regulated desire of that knowledge, the best part of which she might have acquired with dignity, at her leisure hours ; an unbounded vanity, eager to exhibit to foreign countries those attainments which ought to have been exercised in governing her own ;—to be thought a philosopher by wits, and a wit by philosophers ;—this was the preposterous ambition of a queen born to rule a brave people, and naturally possessed of talents, which might have made that people happy. Thus it was that the daughter of the great Gustavus, who might have adorned that throne for which he so bravely fought, for want of the discretion of a well-balanced mind, and the virtues of a well-disciplined heart, became the scorn of those, whose admiration she might have commanded. Her ungoverned tastes were, as is not unusual, connected with passions equally ungovernable ; and there is too

much ground for suspecting that the misfortune of Monaldeschi ended with being his murderer. It is not surprising, that she who abdicated her throne should abjure her religion. Having renounced every thing else which was worth preserving, she ended by renouncing the Protestant faith.

It may not be without its uses to the royal pupil, to compare the conduct of Christina with that of Alfred, in those points in which they agreed, and those in which they exhibited so striking an opposition.—To contrast the Swede, who with the advantage of a lettered education, descended from the throne, abandoned the noblest and widest sphere of action in which the instructed mind could desire to employ its stores, and renounced the highest social duties which a human being can be called to perform, with Alfred, one of the few happy instances in which genius and virtue surmounted the disadvantages of an education so totally neglected, that at twelve years old he did not even know the letters
of

of the alphabet. *He* did not abdicate his crown, in order to cultivate his own talents, or to gratify his fancy with the talents of others, but laboured right royally to assemble around the throne all the abilities of his country. Alfred had no sooner tasted the charms of learning, than his great genius unfolded itself. He was enchanted with the elegancies of literature to a degree which, at first, seemed likely to divert him from all other objects. But he soon reflected, that a prince is not born for himself. When, therefore, he was actually called to the throne, did *he* weakly desert his royal duties, to run into distant lands, to recite Saxon verses, or to repeat that classic poetry of which he became so enamoured? No. Like a true patriot, he devoted his rare genius to the noblest purposes. He dedicated the talents of the sovereign to the improvement of the people. He did not renounce his learning when he became a king, but he consecrated it to a truly royal purpose. And while the Swedish vagrant

was subsisting on eleemosynary flattery, bestowed in pity to her real, but misapplied abilities, Alfred was exercising his talents like the father of his country. He did not consider study as a mere gratification of his own taste. He knew that a king has nothing exclusively his own, not even his literary attainments. He threw his erudition, like his other possessions, into the public stock. He diffused among the people his own knowledge, which flowed in all directions, like streams from their parent fountain, fertilizing every portion of the human soil, so as to produce, if not a rapid growth, yet a disposition both for science and virtue, where shortly before there had been a barbarous waste, a complete moral and mental desolation.

CHAP. XXVI.

*Observations on the Age of Louis XIV. and
on Voltaire.*

IF in the present work we frequently cite Louis XIV. it is because on such an occasion his idea naturally presents itself. His reign was so long; his character so prominent; his qualities so ostensible; his affairs were so interwoven with those of the other countries of Europe; and especially with those of England; the period in which he lived produced such a revolution in manners; and, above all, his encomiastic historian, Voltaire, has decorated both the period and the king with so much that is great and brilliant, that they fill a large space in the eye of the reader. Voltaire writes as if the *Age of Louis XIV.* bounded the circle of human glory;

glory ; as if the antecedent history of Europe were among those inconsiderable and obscure annals, which are either lost in fiction, or sunk in insignificance ; as if France at the period he celebrates, bore the same relation to the modern, that Rome did to the ancient world, when she divided the globe into two portions, Romans and barbarians ; as if Louis were the central sun from which all the lesser lights of the European firmament borrowed their feeble radiance.

But whatever other countries may do, England at least is able to look back with triumph to ages anterior to that which is exclusively denominated the age of Louis XIV. Nay, in that vaunted age itself we venture to dispute with France the palm of glory. To all they boast of arms, we need produce no other proof of superiority than that we conquered the boasters. To all that they bring in science, and it must be allowed that they bring much, or where would be

be the honour of eclipsing them? we have to oppose our Locke, our Boyle, and our Newton. To their long list of wits and of poets, it would be endless, in the way of competition, to attempt enumerating, star by star, the countless constellation which illuminated the bright contemporary reign of Anne.

But the principal reason for which we so often cite the conduct, and, in citing the conduct, refer to the errors of Louis, is, that there was a time, when the splendour of his character, his imposing magnificence and generosity, made us in too much danger of considering him as a model. The illusion has in a good degree vanished; yet the inexperienced reader is not only still liable, by the dazzling qualities of the king, to be blinded to his vices, but is in danger of not finding out that those very qualities were themselves little better than vices.

But it is not enough for writers, who wish to promote the best interests of the great, to expose *vices*, they should also

consider it as part of their duty to strip off the mask from *false virtues*, especially those to which the highly born and the highly flattered are peculiarly liable. To those who are captivated with the shining annals of the ambitious and the magnificent ; who are struck with the glories with which the brows of the bold and the prosperous are encircled ; such calm, unobtrusive qualities as justice, charity, temperance, meekness, and purity, will make but a mean figure ; or, at best, will be considered only as the virtues of the vulgar, not as the attributes of Kings. While in the portrait of the conqueror, ambition, sensuality, oppression, luxury, and pride, painted in the least offensive colours, and blended with the bright tints of personal bravery, gaiety, and profuse liberality, will lead the sanguine and the young to doubt whether the former class of qualities *can* be very mischievous, which is so blended and lost in the latter ; especially when they find that hardly any abatement is made by the historian for the
one,

one, while the other is held up to admiration.

There is no family in which the shewy qualities have more blinded the reader, and sometimes the writer also, to their vices, than the Princes of the house of Medici. The profligate Alexander, the first usurper of the dukedom of Florence, is declared, by one of his historians, Sandoval, *to be a person of excellent conduct*; and though the writer himself acknowledges his extreme licentiousness, yet he says, "he won the Florentines by his *obliging manners*:" those Florentines whom he not only robbed of their freedom, but dishonoured in the persons of their wives and daughters; his unbounded profligacy not even respecting the sanctity of convents! Another writer, speaking of the house of Medici collectively, says, "their having restored knowledge and elegance will, in time, obliterate their faults. Their *usurpation, tyranny, pride, perfidy, vindictive cruelty, paricides, and incest, will be remembered no more.*"

“ more. *Future ages will forget their atrocious crimes in fond admiration* *!” Ought historians to teach such lessons to Princes? Ought they to be told that “ knowledge and elegance” cannot be bought too dear, though purchased by such atrocious crimes? — The illustrious House of Medici seems to have revived, in every point of resemblance, the Athenian character. With one or two honourable exceptions, it exhibits the same union of moral corruption, with mental taste; the same genius for the arts, and the same neglect of the virtues; the same polish, and the same profligacy; the same passion for learning, and the same appetite for pleasure; the same interchange of spectacles and assassinations; the same preference of the beauty of a statue to the life of a citizen.

So false are the estimates which have ever been made of human conduct; so seldom has praise been justly bestowed in this life;

* Noble’s Memoirs of the illustrious House of Medici.

so many wrong actions not only escape censure, but are accounted reputable, that it furnishes one strong argument for a future retribution. This injustice of human judgment led even the pagan Plato, in the person of Socrates, to assign, in an ingenious fiction, a reason why a judgment after death was appointed. He accounts for the necessity of this, by observing, that in a preceding period each person had been judged in his *lifetime*, and by *living judges*. The consequence was, that false judgments were continually passed. The reason of these unjust decisions, he observes, is, that men being judged in the *body*, the blemishes and defects of their *minds* are overlooked, in consideration of their beauty, their high rank, or their riches: and being also surrounded by a multitude who are always ready to extol their virtues, the judges of course are biased; and being themselves also in the body, their own minds likewise are darkened. It was therefore determined, that

that men should not be called to their trial till after death, when they shall appear before the judge, himself a pure ethereal spirit, stripped of that body and those ornamental appendages which had misled earthly judges*. The spirit of this fable is as applicable to the age of Louis XIV. as it was to that of Alexander, in which it was written.

Liberality is a truly royal virtue, a virtue too, which has its own immediate reward in the delight which accompanies its exercise. All wealth is in order to diffusion. If novelty be, as has been said, the great charm of life, there is no way of enjoying it so perfectly as by perpetual acts of beneficence. The great become insensible to the pleasure of their own affluence, from having been long used to it: but, in the distribution of riches, there is always something fresh and reviving; and the opulent

* See Guardian, No. 27.

add to their own stock of happiness all that their bounty bestows on others. It is pity, therefore, on the mere score of voluptuousness, that neither Vitellius nor Elagabalus, nor any of the other imperial gourmands, was ever so fortunate as to find out this multiplied luxury of "eating with many mouths at once."—Homage must satiate, intemperance will cloy, splendour will fatigue, dissipation exhaust, and adulation surfeit; but the delights of beneficence will be always new and refreshing. And there is no quality in which a prince has it more in his power to exhibit a faint resemblance of that great being, whose representative he is, than in the capacity and the love of this communicative goodness.

But, it is the perfection of the Christian virtues, that they never intrench on each other. It is a trite remark, yet a remark that requires to be repeated, that liberality loses the very name of virtue, when it is practised at the expence of justice, or even of prudence. It must be allowed, that of
all

all the species of liberality, there is not one more truly royal than that which fosters genius and rewards letters. But the motive of the patron, and the resources from which his bounty is drawn, must determine on the merit of the action. Leo X. has been extolled by all his historians as a prodigy of generosity; a quality, indeed, which eminently distinguished his whole family: but the admiration excited by reading the numberless instances of his munificent spirit in remunerating men of talents, will receive a great drawback, by reflecting, that he drew a large part of the resources necessary for his liberality from the scandalous *sale of indulgencies*. This included not only selling the good works of the saints, (of which the church had always an inexhaustible chest in hand,) over and above such as were necessary to their own salvation, to any affluent sinner who was rich enough to pay for them; not only a full pardon for all sins past and present of the living offender, but for all that were to come,

come, however great their number or enormous their nature*.

The splendid pontiff earned an immortal fame in the grateful pages of those scholars who tasted of his bounty, while, by this operation of fraud upon folly, the credulous multitude were drained of their money, the ignorant tempted to the boldest impiety, the vicious to the most unbounded profligacy, and the measure of the iniquities of the church of Rome was filled up.

But Louis XIV. carried this honourable generosity to an extent unknown before. He bestowed presents and pensions on no less than sixty men of the most eminent talents and learning in different countries of Europe. One is sorry to be compelled,

* This munificent pope, not contented with supplying his own wants by this spiritual traffic; provided also for his relations by setting them up in the same lucrative commerce. His sister Magdalen's portion was derived from the large sphere assigned her for carrying on this merchandize; her warehouse was in Saxony. More distant relations had smaller shops in different provinces, for the sale of this popular commodity.

by

by truth, to detract from the splendour of such liberality, by two remarks. In the first place, it is notorious, that the bounty originated from his having learned that Cardinal Richelieu had sent large presents to many learned foreigners, who had written panegyrics on him. Who can help suspecting, that the king, less patient or less prudent than the Cardinal, was eager to pay before-hand for his own anticipated panegyrics? Secondly, who can help regretting, that the large sums thus liberally bestowed, had not been partly subtracted from the expence of his own boundless self-gratifications, which were at the same time carried on with a profusion without example? For Louis was contented with bringing into action a sentiment which Nero even ventured to put into words, "that there was no other use of treasure but to squander it." Who can forget that this money had been extorted from the people, by every impost and exaction which Colbert, his indefatigable minister, himself a patron

patron of genius, could devise? How ineffectually does the historian and eulogist of the king labour to vindicate him on this very ground of profusion, from the imputed charge of avarice, by strangely asserting, that a king of France, who possesses no income distinct from the revenues of the state, and who only distributes the public money, cannot be accused of covetousness! an apology almost as bad as the imputed crime. For, where is the merit of any liberality which not only subtracts nothing from the gratification of the giver, but which is exercised at the positive expence of the public comfort*?

Colbert,

* The person who now holds the reins of government in a neighbouring nation, is said successfully to have adopted similar measures. He early made it his studious care to buy up the good report of authors and men of talents, knowing mankind well enough to be assured, that this was the sure and immediate road to that fame for which he pants. Near spectators instantly detect the fallacy; but strangers, as he foresaw, would mistake the adulation of these bribed witnesses for the general opinion;

Colbert has been even preferred to Sully, for his zeal in diminishing speculation and public abuses. But though Colbert was a very able minister, yet there was a wide difference between his motives of action and those of Sully, and between their application of the public money. But, even the profuseness of the extortioner Fouquet, in squandering the revenues of the state as freely as if they had been his own private property, is converted by Voltaire into a proof of the greatness of his soul, because his depredations were spent in acts of munificence and liberality; as if the best possible application of money could atone for injustice or oppression in the acquisition of it!

In how different a mould was the soul of Gustavus Adolphus cast! and how much more correct were the views of that great king as to the true grounds of liberality!

the assertion of the declaimer for the sentiment of the public. Accordingly, the sycophantry of the journalist has been represented as the voice of the people.

As

As brave a warrior as Charles XH. without his brutal ferocity ; as liberal as Louis, without his prodigality ; as zealous a patron of letters as Henry VIII. without his vanity !—He was, indeed, so warm a friend to learning, that he erected schools, and founded universities, in the very uproar of war. These he endowed, not by employing his minister to levy taxes on the distressed people ; not by exhausting the resources of the state, meritorious as was the object to be established ; but by converting to these noble institutions, almost all *his own* patrimonial lands of the house of Vasa !

Against the principles of Voltaire, it is now scarcely necessary to caution the young reader. His disgrace has become almost as signal as his offences ; his crimes seem to have procured for his works their just reprobation. To enter on a particular censure of them, might be only to invite our readers to their perusal ; and, indeed, a criticism on his philosophical and innume-

rable miscellaneous writings, pestilential as their general principle is, would be foreign from the present purpose, as there is little danger that the royal pupil should ever be brought within the sphere of their contamination. I shall therefore confine myself to a very few observations on his character of the monarch, in the work under consideration; a work which is still most likely to be read, and which, notwithstanding its faults, perhaps best deserves a perusal.—His age of Louis the Fourteenth.

In summing up the king's character, he calls his unbounded profligacy in the variety of his mistresses, and the ruinous prodigality with which they were supported, by the cool term of *weakness*. Voltaire again does not blush to compliment a sovereign, whose life was one long tissue of criminal attachments, with having "uniformly observed the strictest rules of decency and decorum towards his wife." His rancour against the Jansenists; his unjust ambition and arbitrary temper; his wars, which Voltaire

taire himself allows "to have been undertaken without reason;" his cruel ravaging of the Palatinate with fire and sword, and its wretched inhabitants driven for shelter to woods and dens, and caves of the earth; his bloody persecution of the Protestants, these he calls by the gentle name of *littlenesses*; not forgetting, in the true modern spirit of moral calculation, to place in one scale his admired qualities of whatsoever class, his beauty, valour, taste, generosity, and magnificence; and to throw into the other, his crimes and vices, which being assumed to be only *littlenesses* and *weaknesses*, it is no wonder if he glories in the preponderance of his virtues in the balance.

By thus reducing a mass of mischief into almost impalpable frailties, and opposing to them with enthusiastie rapture, qualities of no real solidity, he holds out a picture of royalty too alluring to the unformed judgment of young and ardent readers; to whom it ought to be explained, that this tinsel is not gold, that *les bienseances* are

not virtues, and that graces of manner are a poor substitute for integrity of heart and rectitude of conduct.

By the avowal of the same author, it was in the very lap of pleasure, when all was one unbroken scene of joy, when life was one perpetual course of festive delight, masked balls, pageants, and spectacles, that the Palatinate was twice laid in ashes, the extermination of the Protestants decreed, and the destruction of Holland planned. The latter, not by the sudden ardour of a victorious soldiery, but by a cool deliberate mandate, in a letter under the king's own hand.

Voltaire has expressed his astonishment that these decrees, which he himself allows to have been "cruel and merciless," should proceed from the bosom of a court distinguished for softness of manners, and sunk in voluptuous indulgences. We might rather wonder at any such expression of astonishment in so ingenious a writer, were we not well assured, that no acuteness of
genius

genius can give that deep insight into the human heart, which our religion alone teaches, in teaching us the corruption of our nature; much less can it inspire the infidel with that quickness of moral taste, which enables the true disciples of Christianity, to appreciate, as if by a natural instinct, human characters.

It is indeed obvious to all who have sound views of religion, and a true knowledge of mankind, that this cruelty, so far from being inconsistent with, actually sprung from that very spirit of voluptuousness, which, by concentrating all feeling into *self*, totally hardens the heart to the happiness of others. Who does not know that a soul dissolved in sensual pleasure, is naturally dead to all compassion, and all kindness, which has not fame, or interest, or self-gratification, for its object? Who are they of whom the prophet declares, that "they are not moved by the affliction of their brethren?"—It is they "who lie in beds of ivory, that chaunt to the sound of the viol, that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with

ointments." Selfishness was the leading charge brought by the apostle against the enemies of religion. It stands foremost in that catalogue of sins assigned by him as the mark of the apostate times, that *men should be lovers of their own selves*.

But even without this divine teaching, Voltaire might have been informed by general history, of which he was not only an universal reader, but an universal writer, of the natural connexion between despotism and licentiousness. The annals of all nations bear their concurrent testimony to this glaring truth. It would be endless to enumerate exemplifications of it from the melancholy catalogue of Roman Emperors. Nero, who claims among the monarchs of the earth the execrable precedence in cruelty, was scarcely less pre-eminent in voluptuousness. Tiberius was as detestable for profligacy at Caprea, as infamous for tyranny at Rome. In the history of the Mohammedan kings, barbarity and self-indulgence generally bear a pretty exact proportion to each

each other. Sensuality and tyranny equally marked the character of our eighth Henry. Shall we then wonder, if, under Louis, feasts at Versailles, which eclipsed all former splendour, and decorations at Trianon and Marli, which exhausted art and beggared invention, were the accompaniments to the flight, despair, and execution of the Hugonots? So exactly did luxury keep pace with intolerance, and voluptuousness with cruelty.

Even many of the generally admired qualities of Louis, which assumed the air of more solid virtues, were not sterling. His resolution and spirit of perseverance were nothing better than that obstinacy and self-sufficiency, which are the common attributes of ordinary characters. Yet, this pride and stubbornness were extolled in the measure they were persisted in, and in proportion to the evils of which they were the cause: and his parasites never failed to elevate these defects to the dignity of fortitude, and the praise of firmness.

CHAP. XXVII.

Farther Observations on Louis XIV.—An Examination of the Claims of those Princes who have obtained the Appellation of THE GREAT.

IN considering the character of Louis XIV. in the foregoing chapter, we are led, by the imposing appellation of THE GREAT, which has been conferred on this monarch, to inquire how far a passion for shews and pageants; a taste for magnificence and the polite arts; a fondness for war, the theatre of which he contrived to make a scene of the most luxurious accommodation; together with a profuse and undistinguishing liberality, entitled Louis to that appellation, which should seem to imply the possession of all the heroic qualities, of which he appears to have been utterly destitute.

We

We are aware, that the really heroic virtues are growing into general disesteem. *The age of chivalry is gone!* said a great genius of our own time; one who laboured though with less effect, to raise the spirit of true chivalry, as much as Cervantes had done to lay the false. "The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise is gone*!"

Selfishness is scarcely more opposite to true religion than to true gallantry. Men are not fond of establishing a standard so

* We cannot pass over the brilliant passage of Mr. Burke, of which this is a part, without hazarding a censure on the sentiment which closes it. He winds up the paragraph by asserting, that, under the old system, "vice itself lost half its evil by losing all its grossness." Surely one of the great dangers of vice is its *attractiveness*. Now, is not grossness rather repulsive than attractive? So thought the Spartans, when they exposed their drunken slaves to the eyes of their children. Had Mr. Burke said, that those who add grossness to vice make it more odious, it would have been just. Not so, when he declares, that its absence mitigates the evil.

much

much above ordinary practice. Selfishness is become so predominant a principle, especially among the rich and luxurious, that it gives the mind an uneasy sensation to look up to models of exalted and disinterested virtue. Habits of indulgence cloud the spiritual faculties, and darken those organs of mental vision which should contemplate truth with unobstructed distinctness. Thus, in characters which do not possess one truly heroic virtue, superficial qualities are blindly adopted as substitutes for real grandeur of mind.

But, in pursuing our inquiry into the claims of those Princes who have acquired the title of THE GREAT, many difficulties occur. It requires, not only clearness of sight, but niceness of position to enable us to determine.—Perhaps the fifty years which the church of Rome wisely ordained should elapse, before she allows inquiries to be made into the characters of her intended saints, previous to their canonization, pass away to an opposite purpose in the case of ambitious

ambitious princes; and the same period which is required to make a saint would probably unmake a hero, and thus annul the posthumous possession of that claim, which many living Kings have put in for the title of *the great*.

From all that we are able to collect of the annals of so obscure a period, it must be allowed, that the emperor Charlemagne appears to have had higher claims to this appellation, than many on whom we have been accustomed to bestow it. But, while this illustrious conqueror gallantly defeated the renowned pagan Prince and his Saxons; while he overthrew their temples, destroyed their priests, and abolished their worship;—while he made Kings in one country, and laws in another; while he seems to have governed with justice, as well his hereditary realms as those which he obtained by the sword;—while, in a subsequent engagement with the same pagan Prince, he not only obtained fresh conquests, but achieved the nobler victory of
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STO ON PRINCES WHO HAVE OBTAINED

bringing his captive to embrace Christianity, and to become its zealous defender; while he vigorously executed, in time of peace, those laws which he enacted even in the tumult of war;—and while he was the great restorer and patron of letters, though he could not write his name;—and while, as Alfred is the boast of the English for having been the founder of their constitution by some of his laws, so the French ascribe to Charlemagne the glory of having suggested, by those learned conferences which he commanded to be held in his presence, the first idea of their academies of sciences and letters;—while he seemed to possess the true notion of royal magnificence, by employing it chiefly as a political instrument*; and though, for his various merits, the antient Romans would have deified him, and the French historians seem to have done little less;—yet, this

* See the extraordinary account of Charlemagne's splendid reception of the ambassadors from the Emperor of the East.

destroyer

destroyer of paganism, this restorer of learning, this founder of cities, laws, schools, colleges, and churches, by the unprovoked murder of near five thousand Saxons, for no crime but their allegiance to their own legitimate Prince, must ever stand excluded, by the Christian censor, from a complete and unqualified right to the appellation of *the great*; a title to which the pretensions of our Alfred seem to have been, of all Princes, the least questionable.

Nor can we dismiss the character of Charlemagne, without producing him as a fresh instance of the political mischief arising from the private vices of Princes. The licentiousness of this monarch's conduct proved an irreparable injury to the state, the number of natural children which he left behind him, being the occasion of long contentions respecting the division of the empire.

In not a few respects the emperor Charles V. possesses a considerable claim to the name of Great, while yet there is an invincible flaw in his title.—So eminent in the

field as to have equalled the most skilful, and to have vanquished the most successful, generals of his age.—So able in the cabinet, that he formed his plans with as much wisdom, deliberation, and foresight, as he afterwards executed them with promptitude and vigour; and constantly manifesting a prudence which secured his superiority over his pleasure-loving contemporaries, the unguarded Francis, and the jovial Henry. But his principal claim to greatness arises from that species of wisdom, which his admirable historian allows him to have possessed in the highest degree; that science which, of all others, is the most important in a monarch, “the exact knowledge of mankind, and the great art of adapting their talents to the departments to which he allotted them. So that he employed,” continues Robertson, “no general in the field, no minister in the cabinet, no ambassador to a foreign court, no governor of a province, whose abilities were inadequate to the trust reposed in him.” Yet, the grandeur of
Charles,

Charles, consisted entirely in the capacity of his mind, without any consonant qualities of the heart. And it was the misfortune of this renowned politician and warrior to fail of the character of true greatness, alike when he pursued, and when he renounced, human glory; to err, both when he sought happiness in the turmoil of war and politics, and when he at last looked for it, in the quiet shelter of religious retreat. In the latter, his object was indeed far more pure; but his pursuit was almost equally mistaken. In the bustling scenes of life, he was sullen, cruel, insidious, malignant; the terror of mankind by his ambition, the scourge of protestantism by his intolerance. In his solitude, he was the tormentor of himself, by unhappily mistaking superstitious observances for repentance, and uncommanded austerities for religion.

Who can figure to himself a more truly pitiable state, than that of a capacious mind, which, after a long possession of the

plenitude of power, and an unbounded field for the indulgence of ambition, begins to discover the vanity of its loftiest aims, and actually resolves to renounce its pursuits, but without substituting in its stead any nobler object, without replacing the discarded attachment with any better pursuit, or any higher hope? To abandon what may almost be called the empire of this world, without a well-grounded expectation of happiness in the world to come! To renounce the full-blown honours of earthly glory, without any reasonable hope of that glory which fadeth not away; this perhaps is, of all human conditions, that which excites the deepest commiseration in the bosom of a Christian!

There are few things which more strikingly evince the value of true religion, than the despondency and misery experienced by great, but perverted minds, when after a long and successful course of ambition, they are thus brought to a deep feeling of its emptiness. Alexander weeping
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for more worlds! Dioclesian weary of that imperial power, which had been exercised in acts of tyranny and persecution; abdicating his throne, and retiring to labour in a little garden at Salona, forgetting that solitude requires innocence to make it pleasant, and piety to make it profitable! And though the retreat was voluntary, and though he deceived himself in the first moments of novelty, by declaring that he found more pleasure in cultivating cabbages, than in governing Rome; yet, he soon gave the lie to this boast, by terminating his life in a way more congenial to the manner in which it had been spent, by poison, or madness, or, as some assert, by both!—The emperor Charles, after having for a long series of years, alarmed and agitated Europe by his restless ambition, yet, just when its objects were accomplished, flying to a gloomy retreat, devoting himself to severe austerities, and useless self-discipline, and mournfully acting the

weak, but solemn farce of his own living funeral!

How does the reflecting mind regret that these great, but misguided Princes, Charles especially, in whose heart deep remorse seems to have been awakened, should fail finally of that only consolation which could have poured balm into their aching bosoms, and administered relief to their lacerated consciences! Had Charles, instead of closing his days with ignorant and bigotted monks, been surrounded by enlightened Christians, they would have prevented his attempting to heal his wounded spirit by fruitless and unexpiating self-inflictions. Instead of "laying this flattering unction to his soul," he might have been led to sound and rational repentance. His weary and heavy-laden spirit might have been conducted thither, where alone true rest is to be found. He might have been directed to the only sure source of pardon for sin, and have closed his guilty and perturbed life with
a hope

a hope full of immortality. Peace might have been, restored to his mind, not by lessening his sense of his own offences, but, on the only true ground, by exalting the mercies of God, as displayed in the Christian dispensation.

It must be confessed, however, that there seems to be something sublime in the motive of his abdication, as far as related to himself. Yet, might he not far better have made his peace with Heaven, by remaining on a throne, where he would have retained the power of making some compensation to the world, for the wrongs which he had done it; and of holding out his protection to the reformed faith, of which he had been so unrelenting an enemy, and to which his dying sentiments are suspected to have been favourable?

From a view of such striking examples, one important lesson is held out to Princes, in the bloom of life, who have yet their path to chuse in the world that lies before them. It is this.—Though it is good to

of improving his own.—Not like Nero, to fiddle to the Athenians; not like Dioclesian to raise coleworts in Dalmatia; not like Charles V. to bury himself in a monastic cell in Spain, torturing his body for the sins of his soul; not like Christina, to discuss at Rome, and intrigue at Versailles;—but having formed the grand design of giving laws, civilization, and commerce to his vast, unwieldy territory; and being aware that the brutal ignorance of his barbarous subjects wanted to be both stimulated and instructed; he quitted his throne for a time only that he might return more worthy to fill it. He travelled, not to feast his eyes with pictures, or his ears with music, nor to dissolve his mind in pleasures, but to study laws, politics, and arts. Not only to scrutinize men and manners with the eye of a politician, which would have sufficed for a monarch of a polished state; but, remembering that he reigned over a people rude, even in the arts of ordinary life, he magnanimously stooped, not only to study,

study, but to practise them himself. He not only examined docks and arsenals with the eye of an engineer, but laboured in them with the hand of a mechanic. He was a carpenter in Holland, a shipwright in Britain, a pilot in both. His pleasures had a relish of his labours. The king of England, apprised of his taste, entertained him, not with a masquerade, but a naval combat. Previous to this, he had entered upon his military career in Russia, where he set out by taking the lowest situation in his own regiment, and would accept of no rank, but as he obtained it by deserving it. Accordingly, he filled successively every station in the army from the drummer to the general; intending hereby to give his proud and ignorant nobility a living lesson, that desert was the only true road to military distinctions.

We must not determine on the greatness of a sovereign's character entirely by the degree of civilization, morals, and knowledge, which his people may be found to have

have reached after his death: but, in order to do full justice to his character, we must exactly appreciate the state in which he found, as well as that in which he left them. For though they may be still far behind the subjects of neighbouring states, yet that measure of progress which they will have made, under such a monarch as Peter, will reflect greater honour on the king, than will be due to the sovereign of a much more improved people, who finds them already settled in habits of decency and order, and in an advanced state of arts, manners, and knowledge.

The genius of Peter was not a visionary genius, indulging romantic ideas of chimerical perfection, but it was a great practical understanding, realizing by its energy whatever his genius had conceived, Patient under difficulties, cheerful even under the loss of battles, from the conviction that the rough implements, with which he must hereafter work his way to victory, could only learn to conquer by being first defeated,

he considered every action in which he was worsted, as a school for his barbarians. It was this perseverance under failures, which paved the way for the decisive victory at Pultowa, the consummation of his military character. His conduct to the Swedish officers, his prisoners, was such as would have done honour to a general of the most polished state.

He manifested another indisputable proof of greatness in his constant preference of utility to splendour, and in his indifference to show and decoration. The qualities which this Prince threw away, as beneath the attention of a great mind, were precisely such as a tinsel hero would pick up, on which to build the reputation of greatness. The shreds and parings of Peter would make a Louis.

With this truly vigorous and original mind, with an almost unparalleled activity and zeal, constantly devoted to all the true ends which a patriot king will ever keep in view—it is yet but too obvious, why the emperor

emperor Peter failed of completely deserving the title of *the great*. This monarch presents a fresh exemplification of the doctrine which we have so frequently brought forward, the use which Providence makes of erring men to accomplish great purposes. He affords a melancholy instance how far a Prince "may reform a people, without reforming himself." A remark, indeed, which Peter had the honesty and good sense to make, but without having the magnanimity to profit by his own observation. Happy for society, that such instruments are raised up! Happy were it for themselves, if a still higher principle directed their exertions; and if, in so essentially serving mankind, they afforded a reasonable ground of hope, that they had saved themselves!

This monarch, who, like Alexander, perpetuated his name by a superb city which he built; who refined barbarism into policy, who so far tamed the rugged genius of an almost polar clime, as not only
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to plant arts and manufactures, but colleges, academies, libraries, and observatories, in that frozen soil, which had hitherto scarcely given any signs of intellectual life! who improved, not only the condition of the people, but the state of the church, and considerably raised its religion, which was before scarcely Christianity;—this founder, this patriot, this reformer, was himself intemperate, and violent, sensual, and cruel, a slave to passions and appetites as gross as could have been indulged by the rudest of his Muscovites before he had civilized them!

If the true grandeur of a Prince consists, not in adding to his territory by conquest; not in enriching it by plunder; not in adorning it by treasures wrung from the hard hand of industry; but in converting a neglected waste into a cultivated country; in peopling and rendering fruitful a land desolated by long calamities; in preserving peace in his small state, when all the great states of Europe were ravaged by war; in restoring

restoring plenty to a famished people; and raising a depressed nobility to affluence; in paying the debts of a ruined gentry, and giving portions to their daughters; in promoting virtue, literature, and science; in making it the whole object of his reign to render his subjects richer, happier, and better than he found them; in declaring that *he would not reign a moment longer than he thought he could be doing good to his people*,—then was Leopold, sovereign of the small dukedom of Lorrain, more justly entitled to the appellation of *the great*, than the Alexanders, the Cæsars, and the Louis's, who filled the page of history with praises, and the world with tears*.

If Gustavus Adolphus puts in his undisputed claim to the title of *the great*, it is not merely on the ground of his glorious victories at the battles of Leipfic and of Lützen; but because that amidst the din

* See Siècle de Louis XIV. for a fuller account of Leopold.

of arms; and the tumult of those battles, he was never diverted from snatching some portion of every day for prayer, and reading the Scriptures. It is because, with all his high spirit, he was so far from thinking it derogated from the dignity of a gentleman, or the honour of an officer, to refuse a challenge, that he punished with death whoever presumed to decide a quarrel with the sword; to prevent the necessity of which he made a law, that all disputes should be settled by a court of honour*. He deserved the appellation of *great*, when he wished to carry commerce to the West Indies, that he might carry thither also by those means the pure doctrines of the re-

* The King of France, at this same military period, severely prohibited duelling, the practice of which he was so far from considering as an indication of courage, that he took a solemn oath to bestow rewards on such military men as had THE COURAGE TO REFUSE A CHALLENGE. It was an indication, that this Prince understood wherein true magnanimity consisted. See also Sir Francis Bacon's *charge*, when attorney general, against duels.

formation.

formation. He deserved it, when he invited by an edict all the persecuted protestants from every part of Europe, to an asylum in Sweden, offering them not only an immunity from taxes, but full permission to return home when the troubles of their respective countries should be healed.

When such was the union of piety and heroism in the gallant monarch himself, it was the less wonderful to find the same rare combination in the associates of his triumphs. Hence, the pious *meditations* of the celebrated leader of the Scotch brigade * in the service of Gustavus! Compositions which would scarcely be a discredit to a father of the church, and which exalt his character as highly in a religious and moral view, as it was raised, by his bravery and skill in war, in the annals of military glory.

If Alexander deserved the title in question, it was when he declared in a letter to

* Monro.

his immortal matter; that *he thought it a truer glory to excel in knowledge than in power.* It was in that equally moral and poetical reprehension of those flatterers who had ascribed divine honours to him, when, on the bleeding of his wounds, he said, *Look! this is my blood! This is not that divine liquor of which Homer speaks, which ran from the hand of Venus when Diomedes pierced it!* His generous treatment of the family of the conquered Darius was, perhaps, eclipsed by the equally magnanimous, and more disinterested moderation of our own heroic Edward the Black Prince to the captive king of France. This gallant Prince seems to have merited, without obtaining, the appellation of *the great*.

But, if splendid parade and costly magnificence be really considered as unequivocal proofs of exalted greatness, then must the Trajans, the Gustavus's, the Alfreds, the Peters, the Williams, and the Elizabeths, submit their claims to this appellation to those of Louis XIV. Louis himself must,

without contest, yield the palm of greatness to Pope Alexander the Sixth, and Cæsar Borgia; and they, in their turn, must hide their diminished heads, in reverence to the living exhibitor of the late surpassing pomp and unparalleled pageantry in a neighbouring nation, displayed in the most gorgeous and costly farce that was ever acted before the astonished and indignant world!

If, to use the very words of the historian and panegyrist of Louis, "to despoil, disturb, and humble almost all the states of Europe,"—if this appeared in the eyes of that panegyrist a proof of greatness; in the eye of reason and humanity, such a course of conduct will rather appear insolence, injustice, and oppression. Yet, as such irreligious authors commonly connect the idea of glory with that of success, they themselves ought not to vindicate it even on their own principle of *expediency*; since this passion for false glory, carried to the last excess, became, at length, the means of stirring up the other European powers; the
result

result of whose confederacy terminated in the disgrace of Louis.

If ever this vain-glorious Prince appeared truly *great*, it was in his dying speech to his infant successor, when, taking him in his arms, he magnanimously intreated him not to follow his example, in his love of war, and his taste for expence; exhorting him to follow moderate counsels, to fear God, reduce the taxes, spare his subjects, and to do whatever he himself had not done to relieve them.

In like manner, our illustrious Henry V. in the midst of his French conquests, conquests founded on injustice (unpopular as is the assertion to an English ear), never so truly deserved to be called the *great*, as in that beautiful instance of his reverence for the laws, when he submitted, as Prince of Wales, to the magistrate, who put him under confinement for some irregularities; as when, afterwards, being sovereign, he not only pardoned, but commended and promoted him.

If ever Henry IV. of France peculiarly deserved the appellation of *great*, it was after the victory at Coutras; for that noble magnanimity in the very moment of conquest, which compelled a pious divine, then present, to exclaim—"Happy and highly favoured of heaven is that Prince, who sees at his feet his enemies humbled by the hand of God; his table surrounded by his prisoners, his room hung with the ensigns of the vanquished, without the slightest emotion of vanity or insolence! who can maintain, in the midst of such glorious successes, the same moderation with which he has borne the severest adversity!"—He deserved it, when, as he was besieging Paris, which was perishing with famine, he commanded the besiegers to admit supplies to the besieged.—He deserved it, at the battle of Ivry, not when he gallantly ordered his soldiers to follow his white plume, which would be the signal of victory, nor afterwards, when that victory was complete; but it was, when just before the engagement, he
made

made a solemn renunciation of his own might and his own wisdom, and submitted the event to God in this incomparable prayer :

“ O Lord God of Hosts, who hast in thy hand all events ; if thou knowest that my reign will promote thy glory, and the safety of thy people ; if thou knowest that I have no other ambition, but to advance the honour of thy name, and the good of the state, favour, O great God, the justice of my arms, But if thy good Providence has decreed otherwise ; if thou seest that I should prove one of those kings whom thou givest in thine anger ; take from me, O merciful God, my life and my crown. Make me this day a sacrifice to thy will ; let my death end the calamities of my country, and let my blood be the last that shall be spilt in this quarrell.”—

Q si sic omnia !

CHAP. XXVIII.

Books.

“CONVERSATION,” says the sagacious Verulam, “makes a *ready* man.” It is, indeed, one of the practical ends of study. It draws the powers of the understanding into exercise, and brings into circulation the treasures which the memory has been amassing. Conversation will be always an instrument particularly important in the cultivation of those talents which may one day be brought into public exercise. And as it would not be easy to start profitable topics of discourse between the pupil and those around her, without inventing some little previous introduction, it might not be useless to suggest a simple preparation for the occasional discussion of topics, somewhat above the ordinary cast of familiar intercourse.

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To burthen the memory with a load of dry matter would, on the one hand, be dull ; and with a mass of poetry, which she can have little occasion to use, would, on the other, be superfluous. But, as the understanding opens, and years advance, might she not occasionally commit to memory, from the best authors in every department, one select passage, one weighty sentence, one striking precept, which, in the hours devoted to society and relaxation, might form a kind of thesis for interesting conversation ? For instance, a short specimen of eloquence from South, or of reasoning from Barrow ; a detached reflection on the analogy of religion to the constitution of nature from Butler ; a political character from Clarendon ; a maxim of prudence from the proverbs ; a precept of government from Bacon ; a moral document from the Rambler ; a passage of ancient history from Plutarch ; a sketch of national manners from Goldsmith's Traveller, or of individual character from the

Vanity of Human Wishes ; an aphorism on the contempt of riches from Seneca, or a paragraph on the wealth of nations from Adam Smith ; a rule of conduct from Sir Matthew Hale, or a sentiment of benevolence from Mr. Addison ; a devout contemplation from bishop Hall, or a principle of taste from Quintilian ; an opinion on the law of nations from Vattel, or on the law of England from Blackstone.

Might not any one of the topics, thus suggested by the recitation of a single passage, be made the ground of a short rational conversation, without the formality of debate, or the solemnity of an academical disputation ? Persons naturally get a custom of reading with more sedulous attention, when they expect to be called upon to produce the substance of what they have read ; and in order to prevent desultory and unsettled habits, it would be well, on these occasions, to tie the mind down to the one selected topic, and not to allow it to wander from the point under consideration.

This

This practice, steadily observed, would strengthen the faculties of thinking, and reasoning, and consequently highly improve the powers of conversation.

Of books a considerable number, besides those in the foregoing passage, has already been suggested. But, though we have ventured to recommend many works which seemed peculiarly applicable to the present purpose, we do not presume to point out any thing like a systematic course of reading. This will be arranged by far abler judges, especially in that most important instance, the choice of books of divinity. In a language so abounding as the English with the treasures of theological composition, the difficulty will consist, not in finding much that is excellent, but in selecting that which unites the most excellencies.

Of elementary books which teach the first rudiments of Christianity, there is no doubt but the best use has been already made. In aid of these, the deepest and most impressive knowledge will be communicated

communicated to the mind, by familiar colloquial explanation of every portion of Scripture, daily, as it is read. Such an habitual, and, at the same time, clear and simple exposition, would tend to do away the most material of those difficulties, and obscurities, with which the sacred writings are charged, and which are commonly pleaded as a reason for not putting them, in their genuine form, into the hands of youth. There is no book whatever which affords more matter for interesting and animated conversation; and for variety, there is no book which is at all comparable to it. It were to be wished, that the sacred volume were not too generally made to give way to histories and expositions of the Bible. These last are excellent subordinate aids; but it is to be feared that they are sometimes almost exclusively adopted, to the neglect of the Bible itself. Thus the mere facts and incidents being retained, separated from the doctrines, sentiments, and precepts, which, like a golden thread, run through

through every part of the history, and are every where interwoven with its texture; and the narrative being also stripped of its venerable phraseology and touching style, the Bible is robbed of its principal charm; and the devotional and historical ideas being thus separated, the impression both on the memory and the feelings becomes much weakened.—Our remarks on the Scripture itself we shall reserve for a future chapter.

It has been a rule observed throughout this work, to forbear naming living authors, except incidentally in one or two instances. This rule, which was adopted from delicacy, is at present become inconvenient, as it prevents our giving highly merited commendation to various religious works, of almost every description; to critical as well as practical elucidations of Scripture;—to Treatises on the internal principles, and on the duties of religion; on the efficacy, as well as the evidences, of Christianity; works not less admirable in point of composition, than

than estimable for their substantial worth; and which will inevitably be adopted, as the royal education advances.

We would only presume to offer one remark on the study of divines, whether ancient or modern. A luminous style, and a perspicuous expression, will cast a lustre on the brightest truths, and render grave and serious subjects more engaging and impressive. To the young, these attractions are particularly necessary. Yet, in the discourses to be perused, one principle of selection should be observed. The graces of language should never be considered as an equivalent for a sound principle. Dissertations or sermons should not be preferred for having more smoothness than energy, for being more alluring than awakening, nor because they are calculated to make the reader satisfied rather than safe. The distinguishing characters of Christianity, both in doctrine and practice, should always be considered as the most indispensable requisite. For the absence of the great

fundamental truths of our religion, no ingenuity of thought, no elegance of style, no popularity of the author can atone. A splendid diction is a pleasing ornament, but it should never be used as an instrument for lowering the standard of religious truth. Happily we are not wanting in divines, living and dead, who unite all the required excellencies.

Of moral writers we shall speak hereafter. —Next to history, biography must be considered as useful. Those who have properly selected, and judiciously written the lives of eminent persons, have performed the office of instruction, without assuming the dignity of instructors. Well-chosen and well-written lives would form a valuable substitute for no small portion of those works of imagination, which steal away the hearts and time of our youth. Novels, were there no other objection to them, however ingeniously they may be written, as they exhibit only fictitious characters, acting in fictitious scenes, on fictitious occasions,

sions, and being sometimes the work of writers, who rather *guess* what the world is, than describe it from their own knowledge, can never give so just or vivid a picture of life and manners, as is to be found in the memoirs of men who were actual performers on the great stage of the world. We may apply to many of these fabricators of adventures what Lord Bacon says, when he regrets that philosophers, ignorant of real business, chose to write about legislation, instead of statesmen, whose proper office it was.—“They make,” says he, “imaginary laws for imaginary commonwealths.”

Of this engaging species of literature, biography, it is to be regretted, that we do not possess more lives of distinguished men, written with a view to moral instruction, in the manner of those of Bishop Burnet, and Isaac Walton. The lives of the bishop are seriously instructive, as well as highly interesting. Of Walton's, it is difficult to say, whether they are more amusing or informing.

Voyages

Voyages and travels also will form a very necessary class of books; but some of the more recent works of this kind are so interlarded with infidelity, and, under the mask of ridiculing popery, aim such mischievous side-strokes at Christianity itself; and many, especially of the modern French travels, are exceptionable, not only for their impiety, but also on so many other accounts, that they will require to be selected with the nicest discrimination. Our own language, however, can boast many valuable works of this kind, which are clear of these offences. Voyages of discovery, though perhaps less interesting to ordinary readers, will be peculiarly suited to the royal pupil; especially those which have been undertaken, greatly to his honour, by command of his present Majesty, and which contain the discoveries actually made in the hitherto unexplored parts of the southern hemisphere.

TELEMACHUS.

Among works of imagination, there are some peculiarly suited to the royal pupil.

She should never, it is presumed, peruse any authors below those who have always been considered as standards in their respective departments. With the talents which she is said to possess, she will soon be competent to understand great part of a work, which, though it ranks in the very first class of this species of composition, has, it is to be feared, fallen into unjust disregard from its having been injudiciously employed by teachers as the first book in acquiring the French language. The fine sentiments which it contains have been overlooked, while only the facility of the style has been considered. *Telemachus* is a noble political romance, delightful to every reader, but specifically adapted to what indeed was its original object, the formation of the character of a Prince. It is free from the moral defects of the classic poets, whose very deities are commonly exhibited with a grossness dangerous to the modesty of youth. Fenelon, while, with a true taste, he never puts any thing into their mouths incompatible with the Grecian fable, never fails to give that imperfect

imperfect pagan moral a tincture of Christian purity. The finest precepts are illustrated by the most instructive examples; and every royal duty is, as it were, personified. His morality is every where founded on the eternal principles of truth and justice. He refers all goodness to God, as its origin and end. He exhibits a uniform lesson of the duty of sacrificing private interest to public good, and of forgetting ourselves in the love of our country. He reconciles the soundest policy with the most undeviating integrity, and puts to shame those, otherwise admirable writers of our own time, who have laboured to establish the dangerous doctrine of *expediency* at the expence of immutable justice and everlasting truth.—From Telemachus we will learn, that the true glory of a king is to make his people good and happy; that his authority is never so secure as when it is founded on the love of his subjects; and that the same principles which promote private virtue, advance public happiness.

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happiness. He teaches carefully to distinguish between good and bad governments; delivers precepts for the philosophical, the warlike, the pacific, and the legislative king; and shews the comparative value of agriculture, of commerce, of education, and of arts; of private justice, and of civil polity. His descriptions, comparisons, and narratives, instead of being merely amusing, are always made to answer some beneficial purpose. And, as there is no part of public duty, so there is scarcely any circumstance of private conduct, which has been overlooked. The dangers of self-confidence; the contempt of virtuous counsels; the perils of favouritism; the unworthiness of ignoble pursuits; the mischiefs of disproportionate connections; the duty of inviolable fidelity to engagements, of moderation under the most prosperous, and of firmness under the most adverse circumstances; of patience and forbearance, of kindness and gratitude; all these are not so much animadverted on, as exemplified in the most impressive instances.

Children love fiction. It is often a misleading taste. Of this taste Fenelon has availed himself, to convey, under the elegant shelter of the Greek mythology, sentiments and opinions which might not otherwise so readily have made their way to the heart. The strict maxims of government, and high standard of public virtue, exhibited in Telemachus, excited in the jealous mind of the reigning King of France, a dread that if those notions should become popular, that work would hereafter be considered as a satire on his own conduct and government, on his fondness for grandeur, for pleasure, for glory, and for war: so that it has been supposed probable, that Fenelon's theological works, for which he was disgraced, were only made the pretext for punishing him for his political writings.

The Cyropædia of Xenophon it may be thought out of date to recommend; but genius and virtue are never antiquated. This work may be read with advantage, not as an entirely authentic history, which

is a more than doubtful point, but as a valuable moral work, exhibiting a lively image of royal virtue, and shewing, in almost all respects, what a sovereign ought to be.—The *Princes* of Xenophon and of Fenelon are models. The “Prince” of Machiavel is a being elaborately trained in every art of political and moral corruption. The lives of the pupils are the best comment on the works of the respective authors.—Fenelon produced *Telemaque* and the duke of Burgundy.—Machiavel, “*il Principe*” and *Cæsar Borgia* !

CHAP. XXVIII.

*Of periodical Essay Writers, particularly
Addison and Johnson.*

TO hardly any species of composition has the British public been more signally indebted than to the periodical Essay ; and, perhaps, it was only from the British press, that such a publication could have issued. The attempt to excite mental appetite, by furnishing, from day to day, intellectual aliment of such peculiar freshness, must have been fatally obstructed by any jealousy of superintendence, or formality of licensing. The abuse of the press is to be deplored as a calamity, and punished as a crime. But let neither Prince nor people forget the providential blessings which have been derived to both from its constitutional liberty. As this was one of the invaluable effects of the revolution in 1688, so perhaps

no other means more contributed to carry the blessings of that period to their consummate establishment, in the accession of the house of Brunswick.

The two writers who have most eminently distinguished themselves in this path of literature, are Addison and Johnson. At a period when religion was held in more than usual contempt, from its having been recently abused to the worst purposes; and when the higher walks of life still exhibited that dissoluteness which the profligate reign of the second Charles had made so deplorably fashionable, Addison seems to have been raised by Providence for the double purpose of improving the public taste, and correcting the public morals. As the powers of the imagination had, in the preceding period, been peculiarly abused to the purposes of vice, it was Addison's great object to shew that wit and impurity had no necessary connection. He not only evinced this by his reasonings, but he so exemplified it in his own compositions,

fitions, as to become in a short time more generally useful, by becoming more popular than any English writer who had yet appeared. This well-earned celebrity he endeavoured to turn to the best of all purposes ; and his success was such as to prove, that genius is never so advantageously employed as in the service of virtue, nor influence so well directed as in rendering piety fashionable. At this distance, when almost all authors have written the better because Addison wrote first, and when the public taste which he refined has become competent, through that refinement, to criticise its benefactor, it is not easy fully to appreciate the value of Addison. To do this, we must attend to the progress of English literature, and make a comparison between him and his predecessors.

But noble as the views of Addison were, and happily as he has, in general, accomplished what he intended ; the praise which justly belongs to him must be qualified by the avowal, that it does not extend to

every passage which he has written. From the pernicious influence of those very manners which it was his object to correct, some degree of taint has occasionally affected his own pages, which will make it necessary to guard the royal pupil from a wholly promiscuous perusal. It is, however, but justice to add, that the few instances referred to, however exceptionable, are of such a kind as to expose him to the charge rather of inadvertence, or momentary levity, than of any unfixedness of principle, much less any depravity of heart.

Of all the periodical works, those of Johnson, in point of strict and undeviating moral purity, unquestionably stand highest. Every page is invariably delicate. It is, therefore, the rare praise of this author, that the most vigilant preceptor may commit his voluminous works into the hands of even his female pupil, without caution, limitation, or reserve; secure that she cannot stumble on a pernicious sentiment, or
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rise from the perusal with the slightest taint of immorality. Even in his dictionary, moral rectitude has not only been scrupulously maintained, but, as far as the nature of the work would admit, it has been assiduously inculcated. In the authorities which he has adduced, he has collected, with a discrimination which can never be enough admired, a countless multitude of the most noble sentences which English literature afforded; yet he has frequently contented himself with instances borrowed from inferior writers, when he found some passage, which at once served *his* purpose, and that of religion and morality; and also, as he declared himself, lest he should risk contaminating the mind of the student, by referring him to authors of more celebrity but less purity. When we reflect how fatally the unsuspected title of *Dictionary* has been made the vehicle for polluting principle, we shall feel the value of this extreme conscientiousness of Johnson.

Still,

Still, however, while we ascribe to this excellent author all that is safe, and all that is just, it is less from Johnson than from Addison that we derive the interesting lessons of life and manners; that we learn to trace the exact delineations of character, and to catch the vivid hues, and varied tints of nature. It is true, that every sentence of the more recent moralist is an aphorism, every paragraph a chain of maxims for guiding the understanding and guarding the heart. But when Johnson describes *characters*, he rather exhibits vice and virtue in the abstract, than real existing human beings: while Addison presents you with actual men and women; real life figures, compounded of the faults and the excellencies, the wisdom and the weaknesses, the follies and the virtues of humanity.—By the Avarus, the Eubulus, the Misellus, the Sophron, the Zosima, and the Viator of Johnson, we are instructed in the soundest truths, but we are not struck by
any

any vivid exemplification. We merely *hear* them, and we hear them with profit, but we do not *know* them. Whereas, with the members of the Spectator's club we are *acquainted*. Johnson's personages are elaborately carved figures that fill the niches of the saloon; Addison's are the living company which animate it. Johnson's have more drapery; Addison's more countenance. Johnson's gentlemen and ladies, scholars and chambermaids, philosophers and coquets, all argue syllogistically, all converse in the same academic language; divide all their sentences into the same triple members, turn every phrase with the same measured solemnity, and round every period with the same polished smoothness. Addison's talk learnedly or lightly, think deeply, or prate flippantly, in exact accordance with their character, station, and habits of life.

What reader, when he meets with the description of Sir Roger de Coverley, or Will Wimble, or of the Tory fox-hunter in
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the Freeholder, does not frame in his own mind a lively image of each, to which ever after he naturally recurs, and on which his recollection, if we may so speak, rather than his imagination, fastens, as on an old intimate? The lapse of a century, indeed, has induced a considerable change in modes of expression and forms of behaviour. But, though manners are mutable, human nature is permanent. And it can no more be brought as a charge against the truth of Addison's characters that the manners are changed, than it can be produced against the portraits of Sir Peter Lely and Vandyck, that the fashions of dress are altered. The human character, like the human figure, is the same in all ages; it is only the exterior and the costume which vary. Grace of attitude, exquisite proportion, and striking resemblance, do not diminish of their first charm, because ruffs, perukes, fatten doublets, and slashed sleeves are passed away. Addison's characters may be likened to that expressive style of drawing, which gives
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the exact contour by a few careless strokes of the pencil. They are rendered amusing, by being in some slight degree caricatures ; yet, all is accurate resemblance, nothing is wanton aggravation. They have, in short, that undescribable grace which will always captivate the reader in proportion to the delicacy of his own perceptions.

Among the benefits which have resulted from the writings of Addison, the attention first drawn to Paradise Lost by his criticisms was not one of the least. His examination of that immortal work, the boast of our island, and of human nature, had the merit of subduing the violence of party-prejudice, and of raising its great author to an eminence in the minds of his countrymen, correspondent to that which he actually held, and will hold, on the scale of genius, till time shall be no more *.

If

* Milton has dropt his mantle on a poet, inferior indeed to himself, in the loftiness of his conceptions, the variety of his learning, and the structure of his verse ;

If the critical writings of Addison do not possess the acuteness of Dryden, or the vigour of Johnson, they are familiar and elegant, and serve to prepare the mind for more elaborate investigation. If it be objected, that he deals too much in gratuitous praise and vague admiration, it may be answered, that the effect produced by poetry on the mind cannot always be philosophi-

verse; but the felicity of whose genius is only surpassed by the elevation of his piety; whose devout effusions are more penetrating, and almost equally sublime; and who, in his moral and pathetic strokes, familiar allusions, and touching incidents, comes more home to the bosom than even his immortal master.—When we observe of this fine spirit that he felt the beauties of nature with a lover's heart, beheld them with a poet's eye, and delineated them with a painter's hand;—that the minute accuracy of his lesser figures; and the exquisite finishing of his rural groupes; delight the fancy, as much as the sublimity of his nobler images exalt the mind;—that, in spite of faults and negligences, and a few instances of ungraceful asperity, he gratifies the judgment as much as he enchants the imagination; that he directs the feelings to virtue, and the heart to heaven,—Need we designate the sketch by affixing to it the name of Cowper?

cally

cally accounted for ; and Addison was too fair, and, in this instance, too cordial a critic to withhold expressions of delight, merely because he could not analyse the causes which produced it. At any rate, it must be allowed, that he who wrote those exquisite *Essays on the Pleasures of the Imagination*, could not be superficial through penury. It is allowed that the criticisms of Johnson are, in general, much more systematic ; they possess more depth, as well as more discrimination ; but they are less pleasing, because they are not equally good-natured. They are more tinctured with party spirit, and breathe less generous and voluntary admiration. But no critic has been more successful in laying open the internal structure of the poet ; though he now and then handles the knife so roughly as to disfigure what he means to dissect. His learning was evidently much deeper, as well as better digested, than that of Addison, and the energy of his understanding was almost univalled. He, therefore, discovers a rare
ability

ability in appreciating, with the soundest and most sagacious scrutiny, the poetry of reason and good sense; in the composition of which he also excels. But to the less bounded excursions of high imagination, to the bolder achievements of pure invention, he is less just, because less sensible. He appears little alive to that species of writing, whose felicities consist in ease and grace, to the floating forms of ideal beauty, to the sublimer flights of the lyric muse, or to the finer touches of dramatic excellence. He would consequently be cold in his approbation, not to say, perverse in his discussion of some of these species of beauty, of which, in fact, his feelings were less susceptible.

He had, however, that higher perfection which has been too rarely associated with those faculties, the most discerning taste and the liveliest relish, for the truest as well as the noblest species of the sublime and beautiful; I mean that which belongs to moral excellence. Where this was obvious,

vicious, it not only conquered his aversion, but attracted his warm affection. It was this which made him the ardent eulogist of Watts, in spite of his non-conformity, and even the advocate of Blackmore, whom it must have been natural for him to despise as a bad poet, and to hate as a whig. It is this best of tastes which he also most displays in that beautiful eulogium of Addison, to which, in the present comparison, it would be injustice to both, not to refer the reader.

His *Tour to the Hebrides* exhibits a delightful specimen of an intellectual traveller who extracts beauty from barrenness, and builds up a solid mass of instruction with the most slender materials. He leaves to the writer of natural history, whose proper province it is, to run over the world in quest of mosses and grasses, of minerals and fossils. Nor does he swell his book with catalogues of pictures, which have neither novelty nor relevancy; nor does he copy, from preceding authors, the ancient history

of a country of which we only want to know the existing state; nor does he convert the grand scenes which display the wonders of the Creator's power into doubts of his existence, or disbelief of his government: but, fulfilling the office of an inquisitive and moral traveller, he presents a lively and interesting view of men and things; of the country which he visited, and of the persons with whom he conversed. And though his inveterate Scottish prejudices now and then break out, his spleen seems rather to have been exercised against trees than men. Towards the latter, his seeming illiberality has in reality more of merriment than malice. In his heart he respected that brave and learned nation. When he is unfair, his unfairness is often mitigated by some stroke of humour, perhaps of good humour, which effaces the impression of his severity. Whatever faults may be found in the Tour to the Hebrides, it is no small thing, at this period, to possess a book
of

of travels entirely pure from the lightest touch of vanity or impurity, of levity or impiety.

His *Rasselas* is a work peculiarly adapted to the royal pupil; and though it paints human life in too dark shades, and dwells despondingly on the unattainableness of human happiness, these defects will afford excellent occasions for the sagacious preceptor to unfold, through what pursuits life may be made happy by being made useful; by what superinduced strength the burthens of this mortal state may be cheerfully borne, and by what a glorious perspective its termination may be brightened.

The praise which has been given to Addison as an essayist can rarely be extended to many of his co-adjutors. Talent more or less we every where meet with, and very ingenious sketches of character; but moral delicacy is so often, and sometimes so shamefully violated, that (whatever may have been the practice) the Spectator

ought to be accounted an unfit book for the indiscriminate perusal of youth*.

However the collection of periodical papers, entitled *The Freeholder*, may be passed over by common readers, it would be unpardonable not to direct to them the attention of a royal pupil. The object at which they aim, the strengthening of the Hanoverian cause against the combined efforts of the house of Stuart and the French court, makes them interesting; and they exhibit an exquisite specimen of political zeal without political acrimony. They abound in strokes of wit; and the Tory Fox-hunter is perhaps, next to the rural knight in the *Spectator*, one of the most entertaining descriptions of character in our language. Of these, as well as of his other essays, it may be said, that in them the follies, the affectations, and the absurdities of life are portrayed with the lightest

* Happily all Addison's papers have been selected by Tickell, in his edition of Addison's works.

touches

touches of the most delicate pencil; that never was ridicule more nicely pointed, nor satire more playfully inoffensive.

In the *Guardian* there is hardly any thing that is seriously exceptionable; and this work is enriched with some essays that are not to be placed beneath even those of Addison. It will be obvious, that we allude to the papers ascribed to bishop Berkeley. These essays bear the marks of a mind at once vigorous and correct, deep in reflection, and opulent in imagery. They are chiefly directed against the free-thinkers, a name by which the infidels of that age chose to call themselves. And never, perhaps, has that wretched character been more admirably illustrated than in the simile of the fly on St. Paul's cathedral.

Another difference between Addison and Johnson is, that the periodical writings of the former are those in which the powers of his mind appear to most advantage. Not so in the case of Johnson. Solidly valuable as the Rambler must be accounted;

in the point of celebrity, it probably owes much more to its author, than it has conferred on him. A forbidding stateliness, a rigid and yet inflated style, an almost total absence of ease and cheerfulness, would too probably bring neglect on the great and various excellencies of these volumes, if they had been the single work of their author. But his other writings, and, above all, that inexhaustible fund of pleasure and profit, the Lives of the Poets, will secure perpetuated attention to every work which bears the name of Johnson. On the ground of distinct attractiveness, the *Idler* is the most engaging of Johnson's periodical works; the manner being less severe, and the matter more amusing.

The *Adventurer*, perhaps, on account of its interesting tales, and affecting narratives, is, of all others of its class, the most strictly suitable to youth. It also contains much general knowledge, elegant criticism, and various kinds of pleasing information. In almost all these works, the Eastern Tales,
Allegories,

Allegories, and Visions, are interesting in the narrative, elevated in the sentiment, pure in the descriptions, and sublime in the moral. They convey lessons peculiarly appropriated to the great, most of the fictitious personages who are made the vehicles of instruction being either princes or statesmen.

If we advert to religion, the praise of Addison in this infinitely important instance must not be omitted. Johnson never *loses sight* of religion; but on very few occasions does he particularly dwell upon it. In one or two passages * only has he given vent to his religious feelings; and his sentiments are so soundly, indeed so sublimely excellent, that it is impossible not to regret the scantiness with which he has afforded them. But Addison seems to delight in the subject, and, what is remarkable, his devout feelings seem to have much transcended his

* Number VII. in the Rambler; paper on affliction in the Idler; and the noble passage in the account of Iona.

theological accuracy. To the latter, exception might justly be taken in one or two instances * ; to the former, never. If it were to be asked, where are the elevating, ennobling, felicitating effects of religion on the human mind as safely stated, and as happily expressed, as in any English author? perhaps a juster answer could scarcely be given than—in *the devotional papers of Addison*.

* See particularly that very exceptionable paper in the Spectator, No. 459.—Also, another on Superstition and Enthusiasm.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXX.

Books of Amusement.

As the royal person will hereafter require books of amusement, as well as instruction, it will be a task of no small delicacy to select such as may be perused with as much profit, and as little injury, as is to be expected from works of mere entertainment. Perhaps there are few books which possess the power of delighting the fancy, without conveying any dangerous lesson to the heart, equally with Don Quixote.

It does not belong to our subject to animadvert on its leading excellence; that incomparable delicacy of satire, those unrivalled powers of ridicule, which had sufficient force to reclaim the corrupted taste, and sober the distempered imagination of a whole people. This, which on its first appearance was justly considered as its predominant

predominant merit, is now become less interesting; because, the evil which it assailed no longer existing, the medicine which cured the mad is grown less valuable to the sane; yet Don Quixote will be entitled to admiration on imperishable grounds.

Though Cervantes wrote between two and three hundred years ago, and for a people of a national turn of thinking dissimilar to ours; yet that *right good sense*, which is of all ages, and all countries, and which almost pervades this work more almost than even its exquisite wit and humour; those masterly portraits of character; those sound maxims of conduct; those lively touches of nature; those admirably serious lessons, though given on ridiculous occasions; those penetrating strokes of feeling; those solemnly sententious phrases, tinctured with the characteristic absurdity of the speaker, without any injury to the truth of the sentiment; that mixture of the wise and the ludicrous, of action always pitifully

pitiously extravagant, and of judgment often exemplarily sober.—In all these excellencies Don Quixote is without a parallel.

How admirable (to produce only one instance out of a thousand) is that touch of human nature, where the knight of La Mancha, having bestowed the most excessive and high-flown compliments on a gentleman, whom he encountered when the delirium of chivalry raged most strongly in his imagination!—The gentleman, who is represented as a person of admirable sense, is led, by the effect which these compliments produced on his own mind, to acknowledge the weakness of the heart of man, in the foolish pleasure it derives from flattery. “So bewitching is praise,” says he, “that even I have the weakness to be pleased with it, though, at the same time, I know the flatterer to be a mad-man!”

Wit, it has been said, is gay, but humour is grave. It is a striking illustration of this opinion, that the most serious and solemn nation in the world has produced the work
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of the most genuine humour. Nor is it easy to express how admirably the pomp and stateliness of the Spanish language are suited to the genius of this work. It is not unfavourable to the true heroic, but much more especially is it adapted to the mock dignity of the sorrowful knight. It is accommodated to the elevation of the fantastic hero's tiptoe march, when he is sober, and still more to his stilts, when he is raving.

The two very ingenious French and English Novelists, who followed Cervantes, though with unequal steps even as to talent, are still farther below their great master both in mental and moral delicacy. Though the scenes, descriptions, and expressions of Le Sage, are far less culpable, in point of decency, than those of his English competitor; yet both concur in the same inextinguishable fault, each labouring to excite an interest for a vicious character, each making the hero of his tale an unprincipled profligate.

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If novels are read at all, in early youth, a practice which we should think "more honoured in the breach than the observance," we should be tempted to give the preference to those works of pure and genuine fancy, which exercise and fill the imagination, in preference to those which, by exhibiting passion and intrigue in bewitching colours, lay hold too intensely on the feelings. We should even venture to pronounce those stories to be most safe, which, by least assimilating with our own habits and manners, are less likely to infect and soften the heart, by those amatory pictures, descriptions, and situations, which too much abound, even in some of the chastest compositions of this nature. The young female is pleasantly interested for the fate of Oriental Queens, for Zobeide, or the heroine of Almorani and Hamet; but she does not put herself in their *place*; she is not *absorbed* in their pains or their pleasures; she does not identify her feelings with *theirs*, as she too probably does in the case of Sophia Western

Western and the Princess of Cleves.—
 Books of the former description innocently invigorate the fancy, those of the latter convey a contagious sickliness to the mind. The one raise harmless wonder or inoffensive merriment; the other awaken ideas, at best unprofitable. From the flights of the one, we are willing to descend to the rationality of common life; from the seductions of the other, we are disgusted at returning to its insipidity.

There is always some useful instruction in those great original works of invention, whether poetry or romance, which transmit a faithful living picture of the *manners* of the age and country in which the scene is laid. It is this which, independently of its other merits, diffuses that inexpressible charm over the *Odyſſey*: a species of enchantment, which is not afforded by any other poem in the world. This, in a less degree, is also one of the striking merits of *Don Quixote*. And this, after having soared so high, if we may descend so low,
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is the principal recommendation of the Arabian Tales. These tales also, though faulty in some respects, possess another merit which we should be glad to see transferred to some of the novels of a country nearer home. We learn from these Arabian stories, and indeed from most of the works of imagination of the Mahometan authors, what was the specific religion of the people about whom they write; how much they made religion enter into the ordinary concerns of life; and how observant persons professing religion were of its peculiarities, and its worship.

It is but justice to observe, how far more deeply mischievous the French novel writers are, than those of our own country; they not only seduce the heart through the senses, and corrupt it through the medium of the imagination, but fatally strike at the very root and being of all virtue, by annihilating all belief in that religion, which is its only vital source and seminal principle.

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SHAKESPEARE.

But lessons of a nobler kind may be extracted from some works which promise nothing better than mere entertainment, and which will not, to ordinary readers, appear susceptible of any higher purpose. In the hands of a judicious preceptor, many of Shakespeare's tragedies, especially of his historical pieces, and still more such as are rendered peculiarly interesting by local circumstances, by British manners, and by the introduction of royal characters who once filled the English throne, will furnish themes on which to ground much appropriate and instructive conversation.

Those mixed characters especially, which he has drawn with such a happy intuition into the human mind, in which some of the worst actions are committed by persons not destitute of good dispositions and amiable qualities, but overwhelmed by the storm of unresisted passion, sinking under strong temptation, or yielding to powerful flattery, are

are far more instructive in the perusal than the "faultless monsters," or the heroes of unmixed perfection of less skilful dramatists.—The agitations, for instance, of the *timorous Thane*, a man not destitute of generous sentiments ; but of a high and aspiring mind, stimulated by vain credulity, tempting opportunity, and an ambitious wife.—Goaded by the woman he loved to the crime he hated,—grasping at the crown, but abhorring the sin which was to procure it ;—the agonies of guilt combating with the sense of honour—agonies not merely excited by the vulgar dread of detection and of punishment which would have engrossed an ordinary mind, but sharpened by unappeasable remorse ; which remorse, however, proves no hindrance to the commission of fresh crimes,—crimes which succeed each other as numerously, and as rapidly, as the visionary progeny of Banquo.—At first,

What he would highly, he would holily :

But a familiarity with horrors soon cured

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this delicacy ; and in his subsequent and multiplied murders, necessity became apology. The whole presents an awful lesson on the terrible consequences of listening to the first slight suggestion of sin, and strikingly exemplifies that from harbouring criminal thoughts, to the forming black designs, and perpetrating the most atrocious deeds, the mind is led by a natural progress, and an unresisted rapidity.

The conflicting passions of the capricious Lear ! tender and affectionate in the extreme, but whose irregular affections were neither controlled by nature, reason, or justice ; a character weak and vehement, fond and cruel ; whose kindness was determined by no principle ; whose mind governed by no fixed sense of right, but vibrating with the accident of the moment, and the caprice of the predominant humour ; sacrificing the virtuous child, whose sincerity should have secured his affection, to the preposterous flattery of her unnatural sisters.—These highly wrought scenes do not merely excite in the
reader

reader a barren sympathy for the pangs of self-reproach, of destitute age, and suffering royalty; but inculcate a salutary abhorrence of adulation and falsehood; a useful caution against partial and unjust judgment; a sound admonition against paternal injustice and filial ingratitude.

The beautiful and touching reflections of Henry IV. in those last soul-searching moments, when the possession of a crown became nothing, and the unjust ambition by which he had obtained it, every thing. Yet, exhibiting a Prince still so far retaining to the last the cautious policy of his character, as to mix his concern for the state, and his affection for his son, with the natural dissimulation of his own temper; and blending the finest sentiments on the uncertainty of human applause and earthly prosperity, with a watchful attention to confine the knowledge of the unfair means by which he had obtained the crown to the heir who was to possess it. The wily politician predominating to the last moment, and manifesting

rather regret, than repentance ;—disclosing that the assumed sanctity with which he had been preparing for a crusade, was only a project to check those inquiries into his title to the crown to which peace and rest might lead ; and exhorting the Prince, with a foreseeing subtilty which little became a dying monarch, to keep up quarrels with foreign powers, in order to wear out the memory of domestic usurpation ;—all this presents a striking exhibition of a superior mind so long habituated to the devious paths of worldly wisdom, and crooked policy, as to be unable to desert them, even in the pangs of dissolution.

The pathetic soliloquies of the repentant Wolsey, fallen from the pinnacle of wealth and power to a salutary degradation ! A disgrace, which restored him to reason, and raised him to religion, which destroyed his fortune, but rescued his soul. His counsels to the rising statesman Cromwell, on the perils of ambition, and the precariousness of royal favour ; the vanity of all attachment
which

which has not religion for its basis ; the weakness of all fidelity which has not the fear of God for its principle ; and the perilous end of that favour of the courtier, which is enjoyed at the dear price of his " integrity to Heaven !"

The pernicious power of flattery on a female mind, so skilfully exemplified in that memorable scene in which the bloody Richard conquers the aversion of the Princess Anne to the murderer of her husband, and of all his royal race ! The deplorable error of the feeble-minded Princess, in so far forgetting his crimes in his compliments, as to consent to the monstrous union with the murderer ! Can there be a more striking exemplification of a position we have ventured so frequently to establish, of the dangers to which vanity is liable, and of the miseries to which flattery leads ?

The reflections of Henry VI. and of Richard II. on the cares and duties, the unsatisfactoriness and disappointment attending great situations, the vanity of
human

human grandeur while enjoyed, and the uncertain tenure by which it is held!—These fine soliloquies preach powerfully to the hearts of all in high stations, but most powerfully to those in the highest.

The terribly instructive death-bed of cardinal Beaufort, whose silence, like the veil in the celebrated picture of the sacrifice of Iphigenia by Timanthes, thrown over the father's face, penetrates the soul more by what it conceals, than could have been effected by any thing that its removal might have discovered.

These, and a thousand other instances, too various to be enumerated, too obvious to require specifying, and too beautiful to stand in need of comment, may, when properly selected, and judiciously animadverted on, not only delight the imagination, and gratify the feelings, but carry instruction to the heart.

The royal pupil may discern in Shakespeare an originality which has no parallel, He exhibits humour the most genuine, and,
what

what is far more extraordinary, propriety of sentiment, and delicacies of conduct, where, from his low opportunities, failure had been pardonable. A fidelity to character so minute, that it seems rather the accuracy of individual history, marking the incidental deviations, and delineating the casual humours of actual life, than the invention of the poet. Shakespeare has seized every turn and flexure of the ever-varying mind of man in all its fluctuating forms ; touched it in all its changeful shades, and marked it in all its nicer gradations, as well as its more abrupt varieties. He exhibits the whole internal structure of man ; uniting the correctness of anatomy with the exactness of delineation, the graces of proportion, and often the highest beauty of colouring.

But with these excellencies, the works of this most unequal of all poets contain so much that is vulgar, so much that is absurd, and so much that is impure ; so much indecent levity, false wit, and gross description, that he should only be read in parcels,

and with the nicest selection. His more exceptionable pieces should not be read at all; and even of the best, much may be omitted. But the qualified perusal here suggested may, on account of his wonderful acquaintance with the human heart, be attended with peculiar advantages to readers of the class in question, one of whose chief studies should be that of mankind, and who, from the circumstance of station and sex, have few direct and safe means of acquiring a knowledge of the world, and an acquaintance with the various characters which compose it.

To the three celebrated Greek tragedians we have already adverted, as uniting, with the loftiest powers of genius, a general prevalence of virtuous, and often even of pious sentiments. The scenes with which they abound, of meritorious, of suffering, of imprudent, of criminal, of rash, and of penitent Princes; of royalty under every vicissitude of passion, of character, and circumstance, will furnish an interesting and
not

not unprofitable entertainment. And Mr. Potter has put the English reader in possession of these ancient bards, of Eschylus especially, in a manner highly honourable to his own taste and learning.

Most of the tragedies of Racine are admirably written, and are unexceptionable in almost all respects. They possess, though conveyed in the poor vehicle of French versification *, all the dramatic requisites, and to their author we can safely ascribe one merit superior even to that of the critical exactness with which he has regulated the unities of his plays by Aristotle's clock ;

* It is a curious circumstance in the history of French dramatic poetry, that the measure used by their best poets in their sublimest tragedies is the *anapaestic*, which, in our language, is not only the lightest and most undignified of all the poetic measures, but is still more degraded by being chiefly applied to burlesque subjects. It is amusing to an English ear, to hear the Brutus of Racine, the Cid of Corneille, and the Orosmane and Orestes of Voltaire, declaim, philosophize, sigh, and rave in the precise measure of

A Cobler there was, and he liv'd in a Stall.

we mean his constant care not to offend against modesty or religion. His *Athalie* exhibits at once, a chef d'œuvre of the dramatic art, a proof of what exquisite poetic beauties the Bible histories are susceptible; a salutary warning to Princes on the miseries attendant upon treachery, impiety, and ambition; and a lively instance, of not only the private value, but the great political importance of eminently able and pious ministers of religion.

If the Italian language should form a part of the royal education, we might name *Metastasio* as quite inoffensive in a moral view, though necessarily mixing something of the flimsy texture of the opera with the severer graces of *Melpomene*. His muse possesses an equable and steady pinion: if she seldom soars into sublimity, she never sinks to meanness; she is rather elegant and pleasing, than vigorous or lofty. His sacred dramas are particularly excellent, and are scarcely less interesting to the reader of taste than of piety. They are also exempt

exempt from a certain monotony, which makes his other pieces too much to resemble each other.

It is with no small regret that, persuaded as we are that England is the rich native soil of dramatic genius, we are driven to the painful necessity of recommending exotics in preference to the indigenous productions of our own fruitful clime. The truth is, that though we possess in our language admirable single pieces, yet our tragic poets have afforded scarce any instances, except Milton in his exquisite *Comus* and *Sampson Agonistes*, and Mason in his chaste and classic dramas, in which we can conscientiously recommend their *entire, unweeded* volumes, as never deviating from that correctness and purity which should be the inseparable attendant on the tragic muse*.

* Thompson's tragedies furnish the best exception to this remark of any with which the author is acquainted,

We shall indeed find not only that virtuous scenes, and even pious sentiments, are scattered throughout most of our popular tragedies, but that the general moral also is frequently striking and impressive. Its *end*, however, is often defeated by the *means* employed to accomplish it. In how many, for instance, of the favourite tragedies of Rowe and Otway, which are most frequently acted, do we find passages and even whole scenes of a directly contrary tendency; passages calculated to awaken those very passions which it was the professed object of the author to counteract?

First raising a combustion of desire,

With some cold moral they would quench the fire.

When we contrast the purity, and I had almost said the piety of the works of the tragic poets of pagan Greece, and even the more select ones of popish France, with some of the pieces of the most shining bards of protestant Britain, do they not all appear to have been in an inverse ratio with the advantages which their authors enjoyed?

It

It may be objected, that, in speaking of poetic composition, we have dwelt so long, and almost so exclusively on the drama. It would indeed have been far more pleasant to range at large through the whole flowery fields of the muses, where we could have gathered much that is sweet, and much that is salutary. But we must not indulge in excursions which are merely pleasurable. We have on all occasions made it a point not to recommend books because they are pleasant, or even good, but because they are appropriate. And as it is notorious

— that gorgeous Tragedy
With *sceptred* Pall comes sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes' or Pelops' line :—

that she prefers the splendid scenes of royal courts to the retired walks of private life ; that she delights to exemplify virtue, to designate vice, or dignify calamity, by chusing her personages among Kings and Princes, we therefore thought it might not be altogether unuseful, in touching on this topic,

topic, to distinguish between such authors as are safe, and such as are dangerous; by mentioning those of the one class with deserved commendation, and by generally passing over the names of the others in silence.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXI.

Books of Instruction, &c. Lord Bacon, &c.

IN the "prophet of unborn science," who brought into use a logic almost entirely new, and who rejected the study of words for that of things, the royal pupil may see the way, rarely used before his time, of arguing by induction; a logic grounded upon observation, fact, and experiment. To estimate the true value of Lord Bacon, we should recollect what was the state of learning when he appeared; we should remember with what a mighty hand he overthrew the despotism of that absurd system which had kept true knowledge in shackles, arrested the progress of sound philosophy, and blighted the growth of the human intellect.

His first aim was to clear the ground, by rooting out the preconceived errors, and
obstinate

obstinate prejudices, which long prescription had established ; and then to substitute what was useful, in place of that idle and fruitless speculation which had so long prevailed. He was almost the first rational investigator of the laws of nature, who made genuine truth and sound knowledge, and not a barren curiosity and an unprofitable ingenuity, the object of his pursuit. His instances are all said to be collected with as much judgment, as they are recorded with simplicity. He teaches the important art of viewing a question on all sides, and of eliciting truth from the result ; and he always makes reasoning and experiment go hand in hand, mutually illustrating each other.

One principal use of being somewhat acquainted with this great author is, to learn that admirable method and order which he uniformly observes. So excellent is the disposition he makes, that the reader is not lost, even in that mighty mass of matter in which he arranges the arts of history,

history, poetry, and philosophy, under their three great corresponding faculties, of memory, imagination, and understanding. This perspicuous clearness of distribution; this breaking up his subject into parts, without losing sight of that whole to which each portion preserves its exact subordination, enables the reader to follow him, without perplexity, in the wide stretch and compass of his intellectual researches.

With the same admirable method he has also made a distribution of the several branches of history. He separates it into three divisions,—chronicles or annals, lives, and relations; assigning, in his luminous way, to each its respective properties. Lives of individuals, he is of opinion, exhibit more faithful and lively narratives of things; and he pronounces them capable of being more safely and advantageously transferred into example, than general history.—He assigns also a great degree of usefulness to special relations of actions, such as Catiline's conspiracy, and the expedition

pedition of Cyrus ; conceiving them to be more pleasant by presenting a subject more manageable, because more limited. And as a more exact knowledge and full information may be obtained of these individual relations, the author, he observes, is not driven, like the writer of general history, to fill up chasms and blank spaces, out of his own imagination *.

Politics

* There is one instance in which even this great author has poorly executed his own ideas. After so ably laying down the outline of history, he has shewn little skill, in an individual instance, in filling it up. Few writers have more remarkably failed, than Lord Bacon in his history of Henry VII. It is defective in almost all the ingredients of historic composition ; neither possessing majesty nor dignity on the one hand, nor ease and perspicuity on the other. There is a constant aim at wit and pleasantry, with a constant failure in both. The choice of matter is injudicious ; great circumstances are often slightly touched, while he enlarges upon trifles. The history is feeble narrative ; the style is affected declamation ; loaded, as if in defiance of Quintilian's precept, with those double epithets, which, as that noblest of critics observes, when each does not furnish a fresh idea, is as if every common soldier in an army should carry a footman,

Politics he arranges with the same methodical order, dividing them into three several parts,—the preservation of a state; its prosperity, and its enlargement. Of the two former branches, he allows that preceding authors had already treated; but intimates that he himself was the first who had discussed the latter. As political œconomy will hereafter form an important branch of study for the royal pupil, we are,

footman, increasing the incumbrance without adding to the strength. The history of Henry VII. wants perspicuity, simplicity, and almost every grace required of the historic muse. And what is more strange, we neither discover in this work the deep politician, the man of business, the man of genius, or the man of the world. It abounds with those colloquial familiarities, we had almost said vulgarisms, with which the works of that reign are generally infected, but which we do not expect in this great author. Budgell has published in the Guardian, a collection of numberless passages from this history, exemplifying almost every kind of literary defect; not with an invidious design to injure so great a name, but lest the authority of that name should sanction bad writing. The present criticism is offered, lest it should sanction bad taste.

happily, not wanting in very able modern authors, who, living in our own time, are likely to be more extensively useful, from their intimate acquaintance with existing circumstances, and with the revolutions which have led to them.

Nothing seems to have been too great, or too small, for the universal mind of Bacon ; nothing too high for his strong and soaring wing ; nothing too vast for his extensive grasp ; nothing too deep for his profound spirit of investigation ; nothing too minute for his microscopic discernment. Whoever dives into the depths of learning, or examines the intricacies of politics, or explores the arcanæ of nature, or looks into the mysteries of art, or the doctrines of religion, or the scheme of morals, or the laws of jurisprudence, or the decorums of courts, or the duties of public conduct, or the habits of domestic life ; whoever wanders among the thorns of metaphysics, or gathers the flowers of rhetoric, or plucks the fruits of philosophy,

will

will find that this noble author has been his precursor ; and that he himself can scarcely deviate into any path which Bacon has not previously explored.

Nor did the hand which so ably treats on the formation of states, disdain to arrange the plants of the field, or the flowers of the parterre ; nor was the statesman, who discoursed so largely and so eloquently on the methods of improving kingdoms, or the philosopher who descanted on the means of augmenting science, above teaching the pleasing art to select the sheltered spot for the tender exotic, to give minute instructions for polishing "the dry smooth-shaven green," for raising a strawberry, or cultivating a rose.

His *moral essays* are fraught with familiar wisdom, and practical virtue. With this intellectual and moral treasure the royal pupil cannot be too intimately conversant. His other writings are too voluminous, as well as too various and too scientific, to be read at large ; and it is become the less

necessary, the works of Bacon having been the grand seed-plot, out of which all the modern gardens of philosophy, science, and letters, have been either sown or planted.

It is with deep regret we add, that after admiring in the works of this wonderful man to what a pitch the human mind can soar, we may see, from a few unhappy instances in his conduct, to what debasement it can stoop. While his writings store the mind with wisdom and the heart with virtue, we may, from his practice, take a melancholy lesson on the imperfection of human excellence, by the mortifying consideration of his ingratitude as a friend, his adulation as a courtier, and his venality as a chancellor.

Of the profound and various works of Locke, the most accurate thinker, and the justest reasoner, which this or perhaps any other country has produced, we would particularly recommend the short but very valuable treatise on the *Conduct of the Understanding*. It contains a familiar and popular

popular illustration of some important discoveries in his most distinguished work, the *Essay on the Human Understanding*, particularly that great and universal law of nature "the support of so many mental powers (that of memory under all its modifications), and which produces equally remarkable effects in the intellectual, as that of gravitation does in the material world, *the association of ideas*."—A work of which even the sceptical rhapsodist, Lord Shaftesbury, who himself possessed much rhetoric and little logic, pronounced that "it may qualify men as well for business and the world, as for the sciences and the university."

There are few books with which a royal person ought to be more thoroughly acquainted, than with the famous work of Grotius on the *Rights of War and Peace*. In this work the great principles of justice are applied to the highest political purposes; and the soundest reason is em-

ployed in the cause of the purest humanity: This valuable treatise owed its birth to the circumstance of the author, a statesman and ambassador, having, as he himself observes, personally witnessed in all parts of the Christian world, "such an unbridled licentiousness with regard to war, as the most barbarous nations might blush at." "They fly to arms," says he, "on frivolous pretences; and when once they have them in their hands, they trample on all laws, human and divine, as if from the time of their assumption of arms they were authorised so to do."

In the course of the work he inquires, with a very vigorous penetration, into the origin of the fights of war, its different kinds, and the extent of the power of the sovereign. He clearly explains the nature and extent of those rights, the violation of which authorises the taking up arms. And finally, after having ably descanted on all that relates to war in its beginning,

and its progress, he as ably enlarges on the nature of those negotiations and treaties of peace which terminate it*.

With an intrepidity worthy of his genius, he was not afraid of dedicating a book containing such bold and honest doctrines to a king of France. This admirable treatise was found in the tent of the great Gustavus after his death. It had been one of the principal objects of his study. The Swedish monarch knew how to chuse his books and his ministers. He

* The censure frequently expressed in these volumes, against Princes who inconsiderately engage in war, can never apply to that in which we are involved. A war, which on the part of the enemy, has levelled the just fences which separated nations, and destroyed the good faith which united them. A war, which on our part was entered upon, not for conquest but existence; not from ambition but necessity; not for revenge but justice; not to plunder other nations but to preserve our own. And not exclusively, even to save ourselves, but for the restoration of desolated nations, and the final safety and repose of the whole civilized world.

studied

studied Grotius, and he employed Oxenstiern.

If the royal person would peruse a work, which, to the rhetoric of ancient Greece, and the patriot spirit of ancient Rome, unites the warmth of contemporary interest and the dearth of domestic feeling ; in which to the vigour of a rapid and indignant eloquence, is superadded the widest extent of general knowledge, and the deepest political sagacity ;—a work

Where old experience doth attain,
To something like prophetic strain :

a work which first unlocked the hidden springs of revolutionary principles ; dived into the complicated and almost unfathomable depths of political, literary, and moral mischief ; penetrated the dens and labyrinths, where anarchy, who long had been mysteriously brooding, at length hatched her baleful progeny ;—laid bare to view the dark recesses, where sacrilege, murder,

murder, treason, regicide, and atheism, were engendered.—If she would hear the warning voice which first sounded the alarm in the ears of Britain, and which, by rousing to a sense of danger, kindled the spirit to repel it, which in Englishmen is always but one and the same act, she should peruse *Mr. Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution*.

It was the peculiar felicity of this great, but often misguided man, to light at last upon a subject, not only singularly congenial to the turn of his genius, but of his temper also. The accomplished scholar, the wit of vivid imagination, the powerful orator rich in imagery, and abounding in classic allusion, had been previously displayed to equal advantage in his other works, but with considerable abatements, from prejudices which sometimes blinded his judgment, from a vehemence which often clouded his brightness.—He had never wanted genius ;—it would be hard to say he had ever wanted integrity ;—but he had

had often wanted that consistency which is so necessary to make the parts of a great character cohere to each other. A patriot, yet not unfrequently seeming to act against the interests of his country;—a senator, never heard without admiration, but sometimes without effect;—a statesman, often embarrassing his adversaries, without always serving his friends, or advancing his cause. But in this concentration of his powers, this union of his faculties and feelings, *the Reflections on the French Revolution*, his impetuosity found objects which rendered its exercise not only pardonable but laudable. That violence, which had sometimes exhausted itself, unworthily in party, or unkindly on individuals, now found full scope for its exercise, in the unrestrained atrocities of a nation, hostile not only to Britain but to human nature itself. A nation not offending from the ordinary impulse of the passions, which might have been repelled by the ordinary means of resistance, but “committing the oldest

oldest crimes the newest kind of way," and uniting the bloody inventions of the most selfish ambition, and the headlong appetites of the most unbridled vices, with all the exquisite contrivances of gratuitous wickedness. And happily for his fame, all the successive actors in the revolutionary drama took care to fin up to any intemperance of language which even Mr. Burke could supply.

CHAP. XXXII.

The Holy Scriptures.—The Old Testament.

IN speaking of the nature and evidences of revealed religion, it was impossible to avoid anticipating the subject of this chapter, as it is from the Holy Scriptures alone that the nature of our divine religion can be adequately ascertained; and as it is only in that sacred volume that we can discover those striking congruities between Christianity and all the moral exigencies of man, which form so irresistible an evidence of its coming from that God, “who
“ is above all, and through all, and in
“ us all.”

There are, however, some additional points of view in which the Holy Scripture ought to be considered. It is doubtless most deeply interesting, as it contains in it that Revelation from heaven which was
“ to

“to give light to them that sat in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.” But while we joyfully follow this collected radiance, we may humbly endeavour to examine the apparatus itself by which those beams of heaven are thrown on our path. Let us then consider the divine volume somewhat more in detail, endeavouring, at the same time, not to overlook those features which it presents to the critic, or philologist. We do not mean to him who, while he reads, affects to forget, that he has in his hands the *book of God*, and therefore indulges his perverse or profligate fancy, as if he were perusing the poems of Homer or of Hafez.—But we mean the Christian critic and the Christian philologist; characters, it is true, not very common, yet through the mercy of God so exemplified in a few noble instances, even in our own days, as to convince us, that in the formation of these volumes of eternal life, no faculty,

faculty, no taste, no impressible point in the mind of man, has been left unprovided for. They shew us, too, what an extensive field the sacred Scriptures furnish for those classical labours, of which they possibly were deemed scarcely susceptible before the admirable Lowth gave his invaluable Prelections.

The first circumstance which presents itself is, the variety of composition which is crowded into these narrow limits. Historical records extending through thousands of years;—poetry of almost every species;—biographic memoirs of that very kind which the modern world agrees to deem most interesting;—epistolary correspondence which, even for excellence of manner, might challenge a comparison with any composition of that nature in the world; and lastly, that singular kind of writing, peculiar to this sacred book, in which the veil that hides futurity from man is penetrated, remote occurrences so anticipated,

anticipated, as to imply a demonstration that God alone could have communicated such knowledge to man.

In the historic parts, we cannot but be struck with a certain peculiar consciousness of accurate knowledge, evincing itself by its two grand characteristics, precision and simplicity. They are not the annals of a nation which are before us, so much as the records of a family. Truth is obviously held in supreme value, since, even where it is discreditable, there is not the slightest attempt to disguise it. The affections are cordially at work; but they are more filial than patriotic, and more devout than filial. To these writers the God of their fathers is of more importance than their fathers themselves. They therefore preserve, with the greatest care, those transactions of their ancestors, which were connected with the most signal interferences of heaven; and no circumstance is omitted, by which additional motives might be afforded for that habitual reverence, su-

preme love, and unshaken confidence, towards the Eternal Father, which constituted the pure and sublime religion of this singly enlightened people. What Moses magnificently expresses in the exordium of that noble Ode, the 90th psalm, contains the central principle which all their history was intended to impress.—“ Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place from one generation to another; before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst made the earth and the world; even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”

Other nations have doubtless made their history subservient to their mythology; or rather, being ignorant of the facts, they have at once gratified their national vanity, and indulged their moral depravity, in imagining offensive and monstrous chimeras. But do these humiliating infatuations of human kind, universal as they have been, bear any shadow of analogy to the divinely philosophic grandeur
of

of Hebrew piety? All other mythologic histories degrade our nature. This alone restores its primeval dignity. The pious Jews were doubtless the greatest zealots on earth. But for whom? For no "grielly terror," nor "execrable shape," like all other Orientalists, ancient and modern;—no brute, like the Egyptians, nor deified monster, worse than brute, like the Greeks and Romans. But it was for him, whom philosophers in all ages have in vain laboured to discover; of whose character, nevertheless, they have occasionally caught some faint idea from those very Jews, whom they have despised, and who, in the description even of the heathen Tacitus, awes our minds, and claims the natural homage of our hearts. "The Egyptians," says that unbribed evidence, in the midst even of an odious representation of the Jewish nation, "venerate various animals, as well as likenesses of monsters. The Jews, acknowledge, and that with the *mind* only, a single Deity. They account those to be profane,

“ phane, who form images of God
 “ perishable materials, in the likeness of
 “ men. Theirs is *the one supreme eternal*
 “ *God, unchangeable, immortal.* They there-
 “ fore suffer no statues in their cities, and
 “ still less in their temples. They have
 “ never shewn this mark of flattery to their
 “ Kings. They have never done this honour
 “ to the Cæsars *,”

What then was zeal for such worship
 as this, but the purest reason, and the
 highest magnanimity? And how wise as
 well as heroic do they appear who made no
 account of life in such a cause! “ O King,”
 say they, “ we are not careful to answer
 “ thee in this matter, Our God whom we
 “ serve is able to deliver us, and he will
 “ deliver us out of thine hand. But if not,
 “ be it known unto thee, that we will not
 “ serve thy Gods, nor worship the golden
 “ image which thou hast set up.”

Of such a religion as this, what can be

* Tacitus Hist. Lib. v. 5.

more interesting than the simple, the affectionate history? it is not men whom it celebrates; it is "Him who only hath immortality, who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto." And how does it represent him? That single expression of the patriarch Abraham will fully inform us: "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? That be far from thee! Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" A sentiment, short and simple as it is, which carries more light to the mind, and more consolation to the heart, than all the volumes of all the philosophers.

But what was the *moral* efficacy of this religion? Let the youthful Joseph tell us. Let him, at the moment of his victory over all that has most effectually subdued human nature, discover to us where his strength lay.—"How," says he, "shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Of the lesser excellencies of these historic records, little on the present occasion can

and happily, little needs be said. If the matter is unmixed truth, the manner is unmixed nature. Were the researches of Sir William Jones, and those who have followed him in the same track, valuable on no other account, they would be inestimable in this respect, that through what they have discovered and translated, we are enabled to compare other eastern compositions with the sacred books of the Hebrews; the result of which comparison, supposing only taste and judgment to decide, must ever be this, that, in many instances, nothing can recede farther from the simplicity of truth and nature than the one, nor more constantly exhibit both than the other. This assertion may be applied with peculiar justness to the poetic parts of the Old Testament. The character of the eastern poetry, in general, would seem to be that of floridness and exuberance, with little of the true sublime, and a constant endeavour to outdo rather than to imitate nature. The Jewish poetry seems to have been cast in
the

the most perfect mould. The expressions are strictly subordinate to the sense; and while nothing is more energetic, nothing is more simple and natural. If the language be strong, it is the strength of sentiment allied with the strength of genius which alone produces it. For this striking dissimilarity the difference of subject will account. There is one God.—*This* is perfect simplicity. He is omniscient, omnipotent, infinite, and eternal.—*This* is sublimity beyond which nothing can rise. What evinces this to be the real source of excellence in Hebrew poetry is, that no instances of the sublime, in the whole compass of human composition, will bear a comparison with what the Hebrew poets say of the Almighty. For example: what in all the poetry, even of Homer, is to be compared with this passage of David?

“ Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or
“ whither shall I flee from thy presence?
“ if I climb up into heaven, thou art there;
“ if I make my bed in hell, thou art there;
“ if I take the wings of the morning, and

“ dwell in the uttermost part of the sea,
“ even there shall thy hand lead me, and
“ thy right hand shall hold me.”

It is a peculiarity of Hebrew poetry, that it alone, of all the poetry we know of in the world, retains its poetic structure in the most literal translation ; nay indeed, the more literal the translation, the less the poetry is injured. The reason is, that the sacred poetry of the Hebrews does not appear to depend on cadence or rhythm, or any thing merely verbal, which literal translation into another language necessarily destroys ; but on a method of giving to each distinct idea a two-fold expression, so that when the poetry of the Old Testament is perfect, and not injured by erroneous translation, it exhibits a series of couplets, in which the second member of each couplet repeats the same, or very nearly the same sense, in a varied manner.—As in the beginning of the 95th psalm :

“ O come let us sing unto the Lord,
Let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our sal-
vation ;

Let

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,
And shew ourselves glad in him with psalms :
For the Lord is a great God,
And a great King above all gods :
In his hand are the deep places of the earth,
And the strength of the hills is his also.

The motive for adopting such a structure we easily conceive to have been, that the composition might be adapted to responsive singing. But, can we avoid acknowledging a much deeper purpose of infinite wisdom, that that poetry which was to be translated into all languages, should be of such a kind as literal translation could not decompose ?

On the subject of Hebrew poetry, however, it is only necessary to refer the reader to bishop Lowth's work already mentioned, and to that shorter, but most luminous discourse on this subject, prefixed to the same excellent author's translation of *Isaiah*.

Moral philosophy, in its truest and noblest sense, is to be found in every part of the Scriptures. Revealed religion being, in fact, that "day spring from on high," of whose happy effects the pagan philosophers had

had no knowledge, and the want of which they were always endeavouring to supply by artificial but most delusive contrivances. But the portion of the sacred volume which is most distinctly appropriated to this subject, are the books of Ecclesiastes and Proverbs. In the former of these, amid some difficult passages, obscured to us by our ignorance of ancient nations and manners, there are some of the deepest reflections on the vanity of all things earthly, and on the indispensable necessity of sincere religion in order to our ease and happiness, that ever came from the pen of man. It asserts the immortality of the soul, of which some have supposed the Jews ignorant, in terms the most unequivocal. “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.” And it ends with a corollary to which every human heart ought to respond, because all just reflection leads to it.—“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; fear God and keep his commandments, for this
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is *the whole of man*.—For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

The Proverbs are an invaluable summary of every species of practical wisdom. The first nine chapters being a discourse on true wisdom, that is, sincere religion, as a principle, and the remainder a sort of magazine of all its varied parts, civil, social, domestic, and personal, in this world; together with clear and beautiful intimations of happiness in a life to come. As for example:—“The path of the just is as a shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” Here one of the most delightful objects in nature, the advancing dawn of the morning, is adduced as the emblem of that growing comfort and cheerfulness which inseparably attend a life of piety. What then, by inevitable analogy, is that perfect day in which it is made to terminate, but the eternal happiness of heaven? Both these books, with the greater part of the
Psalms,

grosser delusion. If the object be to probe the heart of man to the centre; to place before him the terrors of that God, who to the wicked "is a consuming fire;" to convince him of that radical change which must take place in his whole nature, of that total conquest which he must gain over the world and himself, before he can be a true subject of the Messiah's spiritual kingdom; and of the desperate disappointment which must finally await all who rest in the mere profession, or even the plausible outside of Christianity; it is from our Lord's discourses that we shall find the most resistless means of accomplishing each of these awfully important purposes.

To the willing disciple our Saviour is indeed the gentlest of instructors; to the contrite penitent he is the most cheering of comforters; to weakness he is most encouraging; to infirmity, unspeakably indulgent; to grief or distress of whatever sort, he is a pattern of tenderness. But in all he says or does, he has one invariable
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object in view; to which all the rest is but subservient. He lived and taught, he died and rose again, for this one end, that he might "redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of *good works*," His uniform declarations, therefore, are—"Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.—Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."—"If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee."—"Except a man deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me, he cannot be my disciple."

To corrupt human nature these lessons can never be made engaging. Their object is to conquer, and finally to eradicate that corruption. To indulge it, therefore, in any instance, is wholly to reject them; since it is not with particular vices that Christ contends, nor will he be satisfied with particular virtues. But he calls us, indispensably, to a *state of mind*, which contains, as in a root or principle, all possible virtue, and which avoids with equally sincere detestation

detestation every species of evil. But to human nature itself, as distinct from its depravity, to native taste, sound discriminating sense, just and delicate feeling, comprehensive judgment, profound humility, and genuine magnanimity of mind, no teacher upon this earth ever so adapted himself. In his inexhaustible imagery, his appropriate use of all the common occurrences of life, his embodying the deepest wisdom in the plainest allegories, and making familiar occurrences the vehicle of most momentous instruction, in the dignified ease with which he utters the profoundest truths, the majestic severity which he manifests where hollow hypocrisy, narrow bigotry, unfeeling selfishness, or any clearly deliberate vice called forth his holy indignation; in these characters we recognize the purest, and yet most popular, the most awful, and yet the most amiable of all instructors. And when we read the Gospels with rightly prepared hearts, we see him with our mind's eye, as he actually was in this world, scarce less

less effectually than those who lived and conversed with him. We too "behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

The Acts of the Apostles belong in some degree to the biographic class. Where the matter of a work is of the deepest moment, the mere agreeableness of its manner is of less importance. But where a striking provision has been made for pleasure, as well as benefit, it would be ingratitude as well as insensibility not to notice it. It is indeed impossible for a reader of taste, not to be delighted with the combination of excellencies, which this short but most eventful narrative exhibits. Nothing but clearness and accuracy appear to be aimed at, yet every thing which can give interest to such a work is attained. Neither Xenophon nor Cæsar could stand a comparison with it. St. Luke in this piece has seen every thing so clearly, has understood it so fully, and has expressed it so appositely, as to need only a simple rendering of his

own exact words in order to his having, in every language, the air of an original.

The epistolary part of the New Testament is, perhaps, that with which the generality of readers are least acquainted. Some profess to be discouraged by the intricacy of the sense, particularly in the writings of St. Paul; and others fairly acknowledge, that they conceive this part of Scripture to be of less moment, as being chiefly occupied in obsolete controversies peculiar to the time in which they were written, consequently uninteresting to us. Though our limits do not admit of a particular reply to those unfounded prejudices, yet we cannot forbear regretting, what appears to be a lamentable ignorance of the nature and design of Christianity, which distinguishes our times, and which has given rise to both these suppositions. They, for example, who regard religion but as a more sublimated system of morality, and look for nothing in the Scripture but rules of moral conduct, must necessarily feel themselves

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at a stand, when something infinitely deeper seems to present itself before them. But, if it were first fully known, what the Christianity of the Apostles actually was, their sentiments would soon become intelligible. They treat of Christianity as an inward principle still more than as a rule of conduct. They by no means neglect the latter ; but the former is their leading object. In strict observance of that maxim, so variously given by their divine master.—“ Make the tree good, and its fruit will be good.”—They accordingly describe a process, which, in order to real goodness, must take place in the depths of the heart. They detect a root of evil, which disqualifies man for all real virtue, and deprives him of all real happiness. And they describe an influence, proceeding from God himself, through a divine Mediator, ready to be communicated to all who seek it, by which this evil nature is overcome, and a holy and heavenly nature formed in its room. They describe this change as tak-

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ing place by means of the truths and facts revealed in the Gospel, impressing themselves by the power of God's holy Spirit upon the mind and heart; in consequence of which, new desires, new tastes, new powers, and new pursuits succeed. Things temporal sink down into complete subordination to things eternal; and supreme love to God, and unfeigned charity to man, become the master-passions of the soul. These are the subjects which are chiefly dwelt on in the Epistles, and they will always in a measure be unintelligible to those who do not "receive the truth in the love of it." Even in many human pursuits, actual practice is indispensable to a clear understanding of the principles.

If this be a fair state of the case, ought we not to study these portions of Scripture with an attention suitable to their acknowledged depth, instead of attempting to force a meaning upon them, at the expence of common sense, in order to make them seem to correspond with our superficial religion?

religion? Should we not rather endeavour to bring our religion to a conformity with their plain and literal import? Such attempts, sincerely made, would soon give clearness to the understanding; and a more than philosophic consistency, as well as a more than human energy, would be found there, where all before had seemed perplexed and obscure. We do not, however, deny, that the Epistles contain more reference than the Gospels to Jewish customs, and to a variety of local and temporary circumstances not well understood by us. Yet, though written to individual men, and to particular churches; not only general inferences, applicable to us, may be drawn from particular instructions, but, by means of them, the most important doctrines are often pointedly exhibited.

Where this truly Christian discernment is exercised, it will be evident how much it softens and enlarges the heart! how it extends and illuminates the mental view! how it quickens and invigorates feeling! how it fits

the mind for at once attending to the minutest, and comprehending the vastest things! In short, how pure, how wise, how disinterested, how heavenly,—we had almost said, how morally omnipotent it makes its complete votary!

On this head we will add but one remark more. — Even through the medium of a translation, we observe a remarkable difference of manner in the apostolic writers. There is indeed a very close resemblance between the views and topics of St. Paul and St. Peter, though with much difference of style. But St. James and St. John differ from both these, and from each other, as much as any writers could, who agree cordially in one general end. The Christian philosopher will be able to account for this difference, by its obvious correspondence with what he sees daily in natural tempers. In St. John he will discover the cast and turn of a sublimely contemplative mind, penetrating the inmost springs of moral action, and viewing the heart

heart as alone secured and perfected by an habitual filial reverence to, and, as he expresses it, "communion with, the Father of Spirits." In St. James he will see the marks of a plain and more practical mind, vigilantly guarding against the deceits and dangers of the world, and somewhat jealous lest speculation should, in any instance, be made a pretext for negligence in practice. And lastly, he will perhaps recognize in St. Paul, that most powerful character of mind, which, being under the influence of no particular temper, but possessing each in its full strength, and all in due temperament, gives no colouring to any object but what it actually possesses, pursues each valuable end in strict proportion to its worth, and varies its self-directed course, in compliance with no attraction, but that of truth, of fitness, and of utility. In such a variety, then, he will find a new evidence to the truth of Christianity, which is thus alike attested by witnesses the most diversified; and he will, with humble gratitude, adore that

condescending wisdom and goodness, which has thus, within the sacred volume itself, recognized, and even provided for, those distinctions of the human mind, for which weak mortals are so unwilling to make allowance in each other.

The prophetic part is mentioned last, because it peculiarly extends itself through the whole of the divine volume. It commences with the first encouraging promise which was given to man after the primitive transgression, and it occupies the last portion of the New Testament. It might naturally have been expected, that in a revelation from the Sovereign of all events, the future designs of Providence should be so far intimated; as clearly to evince a more than human foresight, and by consequence a divine origin. It might also have been thought probable, that those prophecies should embrace so extended a series of future occurrences, as to provide for successive confirmations of the revelation, by successive fulfilments of the predictions.

dictions. And lastly, it might be thought reasonable, that while such intimations should be sufficiently clear to be explained by the actual event, they should not be so explicit as to gratify curiosity respecting future contingencies ; such an anticipation of events being clearly unsuitable to that kind of moral government under which the author of our nature has placed us.

It is conceived that such precisely are the characters of those predictions which are so numerous in the Scripture. They point to a continued succession of great occurrences ; but, in general, with such scattered rays of light, as to furnish few materials for premature speculation. Even to the prophet himself the prospect is probably enveloped in a deep mist, which, while he looks intently, seems for a short space to open, and to present before him certain grand objects, whose fleeting appearances he imperfectly catches, but whose connection with, or remoteness from, each other he has not sufficient light to distinguish.

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These remarks, however, apply most strictly to prophecies of remote events. When nearer occurrences are foretold, whether relating to the Jewish nation, or to the countries in its neighbourhood, there is often a surprising clearness, as if in these cases, the intention was to direct conduct for the present, as well as confirm faith by the result. And in a few important instances, even distant futurity is so distinctly contemplated, as to make such predictions a permanent, and, to every candid reader, an irrefragable evidence, that a volume so undeniably ancient, and yet so unequivocally predictive, can be no other than divine.

Of this last class of prophecies, as most directly interesting, it may not be useless to point out the following striking examples. The denunciation by Moses, of what should be the final fate of the Jews, in case of obstinate disobedience *.—Isaiah's asto-

* Deut. xxviii.

nishing picture of the sufferings, death, and subsequent triumph of the Redeemer* ; a prediction upon which every kind of sophistry has been tried in vain.—The dream of Nebuchadnezzar, with Daniel's interpretation † ; a prophecy which contains in it an absolute demonstration of revealed religion.—Daniel's own vision of the four empires, and of that divine one which should succeed them ‡. His amazing prophecy of the seventy weeks §, which, however involved in obscurity as to niceties of chronology, is, in clearness of prediction, a standing miracle ; its fulfilment in the death of the Messiah, and the destruction of Jerusalem being as self-evident, as that Cæsar meant to record his own actions in his Commentaries. To these I would add, lastly that wonderful representation of the papal tyranny in the Apocalypse ||, which, however involving some obscure circum-

* Isaiah, liii.

† Daniel, ii.

‡ Daniel, vii.

§ Daniel, ix.

|| Chap. xvii.

stances,

stances, is nevertheless so luminous an instance as to preclude the possibility of evasion. The extreme justness of the statement respecting papal Rome must force itself on every mind, at all acquainted with the usual language of the Old Testament prophets, and with the authentic facts of ecclesiastical history.

Among circumstantial prophecies of near events, may be reckoned Jeremiah's prediction of the taking of Babylon* by the king of the Medes, on which the history of the event, as given by Xenophon in the *Cyropædia*, is the best possible comment.—The prophecy of the fall of Tyre in Ezekiel†, in which there is the most remarkable detail of the matter of ancient commerce that is perhaps to be any where found.—But of all such prophecies, that of our Saviour, respecting the destruction of Jerusalem, as given in repeated parables and express denunciations, is most deeply worthy the attention of the Christian reader.

* Jeremiah, l. and li. † Ezekiel, xxvi. and xxvii.

A question has been started among scholars respecting the double sense of prophecy; but it seems astonishing to any plain reader, of the Bible, how it could ever become a matter of doubt.—What can be more likely, for instance, than that some present event in which David was interested, perhaps his inauguration, suggested to him the subject of the second psalm? Yet, what can be more evident than that he describes a dominion infinitely beyond what can be attributed to any earthly potentate? The fact seems to be, that the Jewish dispensation being, in its most leading parts, a prefiguration of the Christian dispensation, and the most celebrated persons, as well as events, being typical of what was to come, the prophetic spirit could not easily contemplate the type without being carried forward to its completion. And, therefore, in almost every case of the kind, the more remote object draws the attention of the prophet, as if insensibly, from the nearer,—the greatness of the one naturally eclipsing the compara-

tive littleness of the other. This occurs in such a number of instances, as to form one of the most prominent characters of prophecy.

We shall conclude the subject with observing on that over-ruling Providence which took care that the Scriptures of the Old Testament should be translated into the Greek language, before the original dialect became obscure, by which means, not only a most important preparation was made for the fuller manifestation which was to follow; but the sense of the Scriptures, in all important instances, was so unequivocally fixed, as to furnish both a guide for the learned Christian in after-times, and a means of confronting Jewish misrepresentations with the indisputable acknowledgements of earlier Jews, better used to the language, and uninfluenced by any prejudice. And, may we add, that the choice of the Greek for the original language of the New Testament, is not less worthy of attention? By that wise and gracious arrangement, every lineament
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and every point of our divine religion has acquired an imperishable character ; since the learned have agreed, that no language is so capable of expressing every minute distinction and shade of thought and feeling, or is so incapable of ever becoming equivocal : the works which have been composed in it, ensuring its being studied to the end of the world.

CHAP. XXXIV.

*On the Abuse of Terms.—Enthusiasm.—
Superstition.—Zeal for religious Opinions
no Proof of Religion.*

To guard the mind from prejudice is no unimportant part of a royal education. Names govern the world. They carry away opinion, decide on character, and determine practice. Names, therefore, are of more importance than we are aware. We are apt to bring the quality down to the standard which the name establishes, and our practice rarely rises higher than the current term which we use when we speak of it.

The abuse of terms has at all times been an evil. To enumerate only a few instances. We do not presume to decide on the measure which gave birth to the clamour, when we assert, that in the progress of that clamour,

clamour, greater violence has seldom been offered to language than in the forced union of the two terms, *Liberty* and *Property**. A conjunction of *words*, by men who were, at the same time, labouring to disjoin the *things*. If liberty, in their sense, had been established, property would have had an end, or rather would have been transferred to those, who, in securing what they termed *their* liberty, would have made over to themselves that property, in the pretended defence of which the outcry was made. At a more recent period, the term *equality* has been substituted for that of property. The word was altered, but the principle retained. And, as the preceding clamour for liberty was only a plausible cover for making *property* change hands, so it has of late been tacked to equality, with a view to make *power* change hands. Thus, terms the most popular and imposing, have been uniformly used as the watch-words of tumult, plunder, and sedition.

* By Wilkes, and his faction.
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But the abuse of terms, and especially their unnecessary adoption, is not always limited to the vulgar and the mischievous. It were to be wished that those persons of a better cast, who are strenuous in counter-acting the evils themselves, would never naturalize any terms which convey revolutionary ideas. In England, at least, let us have no *civic* honours, no *organization* of plans.

There are perhaps few words which the reigning practice has more warped from its legitimate meaning and ancient usage than the term *proud*. Let us try whether Johnson's definition sanctions the adopted use.—“Proud,” says that accurate philologist, “means, *elated*—*haughty*—*daring*—*pre-sumptuous*—*ostentatious*,” &c. &c. Yet, do we not continually hear, not merely the journalist and the pamphleteer, but the legislator, and the orator, pages who give law, not to the land only, but to the language, using the term exclusively, in an honourable sense.—“They are proud to
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acknowledge,"—"proud to confess." Instead of the heart-felt language of gratitude for a deliverance or a victory, we hear of "a proud day,"—"a proud circumstance,"—"a proud event,"—thus raising to the dignity of virtue, a term to which lexicographers and moralists have annexed an odious, and divines an unchristian sense. If pride be thus enrolled in the list of virtues, must not humility, by a natural consequence, be turned over to the catalogue of vices? If pride was made for man, has not the Bible asserted a falsehood?

In the age which succeeded to the reformation, "holiness" and "practical piety" were the terms employed by divines when they would inculcate that conduct which is suitable to christians. The very words conveyed a solemnity to the mind, calculated to assist in raising it to the prescribed standard. But those very terms being unhappily used, during the usurpation, as marks to cover the worst purposes, became, under Charles, epithets of ridicule

and reproach; and were supposed to imply hypocrisy and false pretence. And when, in a subsequent period, decency resumed her reign, and virtue was countenanced, and religion respected; yet mere decorum was too often substituted for religious energy, nor was there such a general superiority to the dread of censure, as was sufficient to restore the use of terms, which hypocrisy had abused, and licentiousness derided*.

* It is however to be observed, that at no period, perhaps, in English history, was there a more strict attention to public morals, or a more open avowal of religion, than during the short reign of Queen Mary. Nothing was, with that excellent Princess, so momentous an object, as that religion might attain its just credit, and diffuse its effectual influences amongst society. Upon this her deepest thoughts were fixed; to this her most assiduous endeavours were directed. And it was not wholly in vain. A spirit of pious activity spread itself both through clergy and laity. Religious men took fresh courage to avow themselves, and merciful men laboured in the cause of humanity with increased zeal and success. It seems to have been under this brief, but auspicious government, that the dissolute habits of the two former reigns received their first effectual check.

Indifference

Indifference in some assumed the name of moderation, and zeal in others either grew cool, or was ashamed to appear warm. The standard of language was either let down to accommodate itself to the standard of practice, or piety itself was taken some notes lower, to adapt it to the established phraseology.—Thus, morality, for instance, which heretofore had only been used (and very properly) as one name amongst many, to express right conduct, now began to be erected into the exclusive term. The term itself is most unexceptionable. Would that all who adopt it, acted up to the rectitude which it implies! but, partly from its having been antecedently used to express the pagan virtues; partly from its having been set up by modern philosophers, as opposed to the peculiar graces of Christianity, and consequently converted by them into an instrument for decrying religion; and partly because many who profess to write theories of morality, have founded them on a mere worldly principle, we commonly see it

employed not in its own distinct and limited meaning, but, on the contrary, as a substitute for that comprehensive principle of elevated, yet rational piety, which forms at once the vital spring and essential characteristic of Christian conduct.

It is necessary also to apprise those whose minds we are forming, that when they wish to inquire into the characters of men, it is of importance to ascertain the principles of him who gives the character, in order to obtain a fair knowledge of him of whom the character is given. To exemplify this remark by the term enthusiasm. While the wise and temperate Christian deprecates enthusiasm as highly pernicious, even when he hopes it may be honest—justly ascribing it to a perturbed and unsound, or, at least, an over eager and weak mind—the irreligious man, who hates piety, when he fancies he only hates fanaticism, applies the term enthusiast to every religious person, however sober his piety, or however correct his conduct.

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But even he who is far from remarkable for pious ardours, may incur the stigma of enthusiasm, when he happens to come under the censure of one who piques himself on still greater latitude of sentiment. Thus, he who professes to believe in “the only begotten Son of God as in glory equal with the Father,” will be deemed an enthusiast by him who embraces the chilling doctrines of Socinus. And we have heard, as if it were no uncommon thing, of a French philosopher of the highest class, accounting his friend *un peu fanatique*, merely because the latter had some *suspicion* that there was a God. In fact, we may apply to enthusiasm, what has been said on another occasion:

Ask where's the North—At York, 'tis on the
Tweed,

In Scotland, at the Orcades; and there,

At Greenland, Zembla——

But, it may be asked, has religious enthusiasm, after all, no definite meaning? or are religion and frenzy *really* so nearly allied, that no clearly distinctive line can be drawn

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between them? One of our most eminent writers has told us, that "enthusiasm is a kind of excess in devotion, and that superstition is the excess, not only of devotion, but of religion in general."—A strange definition! For what is devotion, and what is religion, if we cannot be in earnest in them without hazarding our rationality, which, however, must be the case, if this definition were accurate? For, if the excess of devotion were enthusiasm, and the excess of religion were superstition, it would follow, that to advance in either would be to approximate to fanaticism. Of course, he who wished to retain his mental sanity, must listen with caution to the apostolic precept, of *growing* in grace.

But, with all due respect to Mr. Addison, may we not justly question, whether there can be such a thing as an excess of either devotion or religion, in the proper sense of the terms? We never seriously suppose that any one can be too wise, too pure, or too benevolent. If at any time we
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use a language of this apparent import; we always conceive the idea of some spurious intermixture, or injudicious mode of exercise. But when we confine our thoughts to the principle itself, we do not apprehend that it *can* become too predominant,—to be too virtuous, being just as inconceivable as to be too happy.

Now if this be true of any single virtue, must it not hold equally good respecting the parent principle of all virtue?—What is religion, or devotion, (for when we speak of either, as a principle, it is, in fact, a synonyme of the other,) but the “so loving what God has commanded, and desiring what he has promised, as that, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found?” Now *can* there be excess in this? We may doubtless *misunderstand* God’s commands, and *misconstrue* his promises, and, in either way, instead of attaining that holy and happy fixedness of heart, become the victims of
restless

restless perturbation. But if there be no error in our apprehension, can there be any excess in our love?—What does God *command*? Every thing that tends to our personal, social, political, as well as eternal well-being. Can we then feel too deep love for the sum of all moral excellence? But what does God *promise*? Guidance, protection, all necessary aids, and influences here; and hereafter, “fulness of joy and pleasures at his right hand for evermore.”—Can such blessings as these be too cordially desired? Amid

The heart aches, and the thousand natural shocks
Which flesh is heir to,

can our hopes of future happiness be too cheering, or our power of rising above the calamities of mortality be too habitual, or too effectual?—Such are the questions obviously suggested by the supposition of such a thing as excess in religion. And doubtless the answer of every serious and reflecting mind must be, that in “pure and undefiled

undefiled religion;” in “loving the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength, and our neighbour as ourselves,” the idea of *excess* is as incongruous and inadmissible, as that of a happy life being too long, or of the joys of heaven being less desirable because they are eternal.

But if, instead of cultivating and advancing in this love of God and man,—instead of loving what God has really commanded, and desiring what he has clearly promised in his holy word,—this word be neglected, and the suggestions of an ardent, or of a gloomy fancy be substituted in its room, then the person becomes, in the strictest and truest sense, a fanatic; and as his natural temperament may happen to be sanguine or saturnine, he rises into imaginary raptures, or sinks down under torturing apprehensions, and slavish self-inflictions.

Here then, if I am not mistaken, we may discover the real nature of both enthusiasm and

and superstition. It is not *excess* of devotion which constitutes the one, nor *excess* of religion in general which leads to the other. But both are the consequence of a *radical misconception* of religion. Each alike implies a compound of ignorance and passion; and as the person is disposed to hope or fear, he becomes enthusiastical on the one hand, or superstitious on the other. He in whom *fear* predominates, most naturally mistakes *what God commands*, and instead of taking that *law* for his rule, “whose seat is the bosom of God, and whose voice the harmony of the world,”* in a most unhappy manner, becomes a law unto himself,—multiplying observances, which have nothing to recommend them, but their irksomeness or uncouthness; and acting, as if the way to propitiate his Maker was by tormenting himself. He, on the contrary, in whom the *hopeful* passions are prevalent; no less naturally misconceives what *God*

* Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, conclusion of the 1st Book.

has promised, and pleases himself with the prospect, or persuades himself into the imaginary possession, of extraordinary influences and supernatural communications. Both, it is evident, mean to pursue religion, but neither has sufficient judgment to ascertain its real nature. Perhaps, in general, some mental morbidness is at the bottom, which, when of the depressive kind, disposes to the superstitious view of religion, and when, of the elevating kind, to the enthusiastical.

Religion, the religion of the Scriptures, is itself an exquisite temperament, in which all the virtues, of which man is capable, are harmoniously blended. He, therefore, who studies the Scriptures, and draws from thence his ideas and sentiments of religion, takes the best method to escape both enthusiasm and superstition. Even infidelity is no security against either. But it is absolutely impossible for an intelligent votary of scriptural Christianity to be in any respect fanatical. True fanatics, therefore, are apt
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to neglect the Scriptures, except so far as they can turn them to their own particular purpose. The Romish Church, for example, became negligent of the Scriptures, nearly in proportion as it became superstitious. And every striking instance of enthusiasm, if inquired into, will be found to exemplify the same dereliction. In a word, Christianity is eternal truth, and they who soar *above* truth, as well as they who sink *below* it, equally overlook the standard by which rational action is to be regulated; whereas to adhere steadily to this, is to avoid all extremes, and escape, not only the tendency toward pernicious excess, but any danger of falling into it.

Did we accustom ourselves to exact definitions, we should not only call the disorderly religionist an enthusiast; we should also feel, that if irrational confidence, unfounded expectations, and assumptions without a basis, be enthusiasm, then is the term most justly applicable to the mere worldly moralist.

moralist. For, does not he wildly assume effects to be produced without their proper means, who looks for virtue without piety ; for happiness without holiness ; for reformation without repentance ; for repentance without divine assistance ; for divine assistance without prayer ; and for acceptance with God without regard to that Mediator, whom God has ordained to be our great high priest ?

But, while accuracy of definition is thus recommended, let it not be forgotten, that there is need on all sides of exercising a candid judgment. Let not the conscientious Christian suspect, that the advocate for morality intends by the term to depreciate religion, unless it appear that he makes morality the root as well as the produce of goodness.—Nor let the moralist whose affections are less lively, and whose views are less elevated, deem the religious man a fanatic, because he sometimes adopts the language of Scripture to express feelings to which human terms are not always adequate.

adequate. We mean not to justify, but to condemn, as a gross defect of good sense, as well as of taste and elegance, that ill-conditioned phraseology, which, by disfiguring the comeliness of piety, lessens its dignity, and injures its interests. Doubtless, a good understanding cannot be more usefully exercised, nor can the effects of mental cultivation be better shown, than in bringing every aid of a sound judgment, and every grace of a correct style, into the service of that divine religion, which does not more contain all that is just and pure, than it coalesces with all that is “lovely, and of good report.”

The too frequent abuse of such terms as *moderation*, *candour*, *toleration*, &c. should be pointed out to those whose high station prevents their communication with the world at large. It should be explained, that moderation, in the new dictionary, means the abandonment of some of the most essential doctrines of Christianity.— That candour, in the same school of philosophy,

logy, denotes a latitudinarian indifference, as to the comparative merits of all religious systems.—That toleration signifies such a low idea of the value of revealed truth; and perhaps such a doubt even of its existence, as makes a man careless, whether it be maintained or trampled on, vindicated or calumniated.—A toleration of *every* creed generally ends in an indifference to *all*, if it does not originally spring from a disbelief of all. Even the noble term *rational*, which so peculiarly belongs to true religion, is frequently used to strip Christianity of her highest attributes and her sublimest energies; as if in order to be rational, divine influences must be excluded. Or, as if it were either suitable to our necessities, or worthy of God, that when he was giving “his word to be a light to our paths,” he should make that light a kind of moral moon-shine, instead of accompanying it with such a vital warmth, as might invigorate our hearts, as well as direct our footsteps.

Though it would be absurd for a Prince to become a wrangling polemic like Henry VIII. or a "royal doctor," like the first James; yet, he should possess so much information, as to be enabled to form a reasonable judgment between contending parties, and to know the existing state of religion. And, that he may learn to detect the artifices of men of loose principles, he should be apprized, that the profane and the pious do not engage on equal terms. That the carelessness of the irreligious gives him an apparent air of good humour, and his levity the semblance of wit and gaiety; while his Christian adversary ventures not to risk his soul for a bon-mot, nor dares to be witty on topics which concern his eternal interests.

It will be important, on the other hand; to shew, that it is very possible to be zealous for religious opinions, without possessing any religion; nay, that a fiery religious zeal has been even found compatible with the most flagitious morals. The church of
 Rome,

Rome, so late as the sixteenth century, presented numberless examples of men, whose lives were a tissue of vices, which cannot so much as be named, who yet, at the risk of life, would fight in defence of a ceremony, for the preservation of a consecrated vase, or a gift devoted to a monastery.

To shew that it is possible to be zealous for religious opinions, without being religious, we need not look back to the persecuting powers of pagan or papal Rome ; nor need we select our instances from the disciples of Dominic ; nor from such monsters as Catharine di Medici ; nor from such sanguinary bigots as the narrow-soul'd Mary, nor the dark-minded Philip. Examples from persons less abhorrent from human feelings, more mixed characters, the dark shades of whose minds are blended with lighter strokes, and whose vices are mitigated with softer qualities, may be more profitably considered, as approaching nearer to the common standard of human life.

That a Prince may be very zealous for

religious opinions and observances, and yet be so defective in moral virtue, as to be both personally and politically profligate, is exemplified in our second James, who renounced three kingdoms for his religion, yet neither scrupled to live in the habitual violation of the seventh commandment, nor to employ the inhuman Jefferies as his chancellor.

Harlai, archbishop of Paris, distinguished himself by his zeal in attacking heresy; so all religion was called, except that of the Jesuits. His activity proceeded from no love of piety, but from a desire to make his way at court, where zeal, just then, happened to be the fashion. His religious activity, however, neither prevented, nor cured, the notorious licentiousness of his moral conduct *. The King, his master,

* It was a fact well known in the court of Versailles, that Madame de Montespon, during the long period in which she continued the favourite mistress of the King, (by whom she had seven children,) was so strict in her religious observances, that, lest she should violate the austerity of fasting, her bread, during Lent, was constantly *weighed*.

fancied,

fancied, that to punish Janfenism, was an indubitable proof of religion ; but to persecute protestantism, he conceived to be the consummation of piety.—What a lesson for Princes, to see him, after the revocation of the edict of Nantz, gratefully swallowing the equally false and nauseous compliments of his clergy, for having, to borrow their own phrase, *without violent methods made the whole kingdom of one opinion, and united all his subjects to the faith of Rome!* Iniquitous flattery! when FOUR MILLIONS of those subjects were either groaning under torture, or flying into exile ; turning infidels, if they resolved to retain their property ; or chained to the gallies, if they preferred their conscience to their fortune !

As the afflicted Hugonots were not permitted to carry their complaints to the foot of the throne, the deluded King fancied his bloody agents to be mild ministers, and the tortured protestants to be mischievous heretics. But, though the kingdom was, in many parts, nearly depopulated by exile

and executions, the sword, as usual, made not one proselyte. The subjects were tortured, but they were not converted. The rack is a bad rhetorician. The galleys may harass the body, but do not convince the understanding, nor enforce articles of faith *.

Under all these crimes and calamities, Louis, as a French memorialist observes, was not ashamed to hear, what Boileau was not ashamed to sing,

L'Univers sous ton regne a-t-il des Malheureux ?

Colbert, who was a wise man, might have taught his royal master, that in this persecution there was as little policy as piety, and that he was not only injuring his conscience, but his country. By banishing so many useful subjects, he impoverished the state doubly, not only by robbing it of the

* Louvois and his master would have done wisely to have adopted the opinion of those two great ministers of Henry IV. who, when pressed to persecute, replied, that they thought "it was better to have a peace which had two religions, than a war which had none."

ingenuity,

ingenuity, the manufactures, and the labour of such multitudes; but by transferring to hostile countries all the industry and talents which he was driving from his own. If the treachery of detaining the protestants, under false promises, which were immediately violated, is to be charged on Louvois; the crime of blindly confiding in such a minister is to be charged on the king.

How little had this monarch profited, by the example given, under similar circumstances, by Louis XII. When some of the pious Waldenses, while they were improving his barren lands in Provence by their virtuous industry, had been grievously persecuted, through false representations, that prudent prince commanded the strictest inquiry to be made into their real character; the result was, that he was so perfectly convinced of their innocence, that he not only protected them during the rest of his reign, but had the magnanimity to declare, that "they were better men than himself, and his Catholic subjects."

Happy had it been for himself and for the world, if the emperor Charles V. had instituted the same inquiries ! Happy, if in the meridian of his power he had studied the character of mankind to as good purpose, as he afterwards, in his monastic retreat, studied the mechanism of watches ! Astonished to find, that after the closest application, he never could bring any two to go just alike, he expressed deep regret at his own folly, in having bestowed so much time and pains in the fruitless attempt of bringing mankind to an exact uniformity in their religious opinions. But, the discovery was made too late ; he ended where he should have begun,

CHAP. XXXV.

The Reformation.

IN order to increase the royal pupil's reverence for Christianity, before she is herself able to appreciate its value, she should be taught, that it did not steal into the world in the days of darkness and ignorance, when the spirit of inquiry was asleep; but appeared in the most enlightened period of the Roman empire. That its light dawned, not on the remoter regions of the earth, but on a province of that empire, whose peculiar manners had already attracted much notice, and whose local situation placed it particularly within the view of surrounding nations; whereas the religion of Mahomet, and the corruptions of popery, which started up almost together, arose when the spirit of investigation, learning, and philosophy, had ceased to exert itself.

That,

That, during those dark ages, both Christianity and human learning were nearly extinguished ; and that, as both had sunk together, so both together awoke from their long slumber. The restoration of letters was the restoration of religion also ; the free access to the ancient authors being one grand instrument of the revival of pure Christianity.

The learning which existed in the church antecedently to the Reformation, was limited to very few, and was, in the general, but meagre and superficial ; and the purposes to which it was confined, formed an effectual obstacle to substantial improvement. Instead of being employed in investigating the evidences of Christianity, or in elucidating the analogy of Christian principles, with the laws of the natural, and the exigences of the moral world, it was pressed into the service of what was called school-divinity ; a system, which perhaps had providentially been not without its uses at a previous period, especially when under the discretion

discretion of a sound and upright mind, as having served both to elicit and exercise the intellect of a ruder age. Study and industry, however they may be misapplied, are always good in themselves; and almost any state is better than hopeless inanity. These men perhaps sustained the cause of religion, when she might utterly have sunk, though with arms little suited to make their support effectual, or to produce solid practical benefit, either to the church or the people. Some of the earlier scholastic divines, though tedious, and somewhat trifling, were, however, close reasoners, as well as pious men, though they afterwards sunk in rationality, as they increased in quibbling and subtlety. Yet, defective as their efforts were, they had been useful, as they had contributed to oppose infidelity, and to keep alive some love of piety and devotion, in that season of drowsy inactivity. But, at the period to which we refer, their theology had become little better than a mazy labyrinth of trivial, and not seldom
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of pernicious sophistry. Subtle disquisitions, metaphysical niceties, unintelligible obscurities, and whimsical distinctions, were substituted in the place of revealed truth; for revealed truth was not sufficiently intricate for the speculations of those puzzling theologians, of whom Erasmus said, that "they had brought it to be a matter of so much wit to be a Christian, that ordinary heads were not able to reach it."—And, as genuine Christianity was not sufficiently ingenious for these whimsical doctors, neither was it sufficiently pliant and accommodating to suit the corrupt state of public morals.

Almost entirely overlooking the Scriptures, the school-men had built schemes and systems on the authority of the Fathers, some of them spurious ones. The philosophy of Aristotle had also been resorted to for some of the chief materials of the system; so that, as the author of the History of the Council of Trent informs us, "If it had not been for Aristotle, the church had wanted many articles of faith."

The

The early reformers defeated these sophisters, by opposing, to their unsubstantial system, the plain unadulterated Bible. The very text of holy Scripture, and the most sober, rational, and simple deductions from thence, furnished the ground-work of their arguments. And to this noble purpose they applied that sound learning, which Providence had caused to revive just at the necessary period. Their skill in the Greek and Hebrew languages enabled them to read the original Scriptures, and to give correct translations of them to the public. And, in this respect, they had an important advantage over the school-divines, who did not understand the language in which their master Aristotle had written. It is no wonder, if an heterogeneous theology should have been compounded out of such discordant materials as were made up from spurious fathers, and an ill-understood pagan philosopher. The works of this great author, which, by an inconsistency not uncommon

uncommon in the history of man, had not long before been prohibited by a papal decree, and burnt by public authority, came, in the sixteenth century, to be considered as little less than canonical!

But this attachment to sophistry and jargon was far from being the worst feature of the period in question. The generality of the clergy were sunk into the grossest ignorance, of which instances are recorded scarcely credible in our day of general knowledge. It is difficult to say whether the ecclesiastics had more entirely discarded useful learning, or Scripture truth. In the place, therefore, of the genuine religion of the Bible, they substituted false miracles, lying legends, purchased pardons, and preposterous penances. A procedure which became the more popular, as it introduced a religion which did not insist on the inconvenient appendage of a good life; those who had money enough easily procuring indemnity for a bad one; and
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to the profligate and the affluent; the *purchase* of good works was certainly more agreeable than the *practice*.

We are far from asserting, that there were no mixtures of infirmity in the instruments which accomplished the great work of the Reformation. They were fallible men. But it is now evident to every sincere inquirer, that many of their transactions, which have been represented by their adversaries as corrupt and criminal, only appeared such to those who did not take their motives, and the critical circumstances of the times, into the account, or who had an interest in misrepresenting them. Many of those actions, which, through false colourings, were made to appear unfavourable, are now clearly proved to have been virtuous and honourable; especially when we take the then situation of things, and the flagitious conduct of the priests and pontiffs with whom they had to deal, into the account.

Mr. Hume has been among the foremost

to revive and inflame the malignant reports respecting them. He allows indeed the *inflexible intrepidity with which they braved dangers, tortures, and even death itself.* But still they were, in his estimation, the "fanatical and enraged Reformers." And he carefully suggests, through the course of his history, that *fanaticism is the characteristic of the protestant religion.* The terms "protestant fanaticism," and "fanatical churches," he repeatedly uses. He has even the temerity to assert, in contradiction to all credible testimony, that the reformers placed all merit in "a mysterious species of faith, in inward vision, rapture, and extasy." A charge, to say nothing of truth and candour, unworthy of Mr. Hume's good sense, and extensive means of information. For there is no fact better known, than that these eminently wise men never pretended to illuminations and impulses. What they undertook honestly, they conducted soberly. They pretended to no inspiration; they did not even pretend to introduce a *new*, but only
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only to restore to its pristine purity, the *old* religion. " They respected government, practised and taught submission to civil rulers, and desired only the liberty of that conscience which God has made free *."

But though, in accomplishing the great work of the reformation, reason, and human wisdom, were most successfully exercised; though the divine interference was not manifested by the working of miracles, or the gift of supernatural endowments: yet who can doubt, that this great work was directed by the hand of Heaven, especially when we consider the wonderful predisposition of causes, the extraordinary combination of circumstances, the long chain of gradual but constantly

* See an excellent appendix to Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, vol. iv. page 136, on the *spirit* of the reformers, and the injustice of Mr. Hume, by that truly, elegant, candid, and accomplished scholar and most amiable man, the late Rev. Dr. Archibald Maclaine.

The lover and the love of human kind.

VOL. II.

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progressive

progressive occurrences, by which this grand event was brought about? The successive, as well as contemporary production of singular characters, calculated to promote its *general* accomplishment, and each peculiarly fitted for his own *respective* work!—So many unconscious or unwilling instruments made subservient to one great purpose! — Friends and enemies, even Mussulmen and Popes, contributing, certainly without intending it, to its advancement!—Mahomet banishing learning from the East, that it might providentially find a shelter in these countries, where the new opinions were to be propagated!—Several successive sovereign pontiffs, collecting books, and patronizing that literature which was so soon to be directed against their own domination!—But above all, the multiplication of contemporary popes, weakening the reverence of the people, by occasioning a schism in the Church, and exhibiting its several heads wandering about, under the ludicrous circumstance,

circumstance, of each claiming infallibility for himself, and denying it to his competitor! — Infallibility, thus split, was discredited, and in a manner annihilated. — To these preparatory circumstances, we may add the infatuation, or rather judicial blindness, of the papal power; the errors, even in worldly prudence, committed by Leo, a pontiff otherwise of admirable talents! — The half measures adopted, at one time, of inefficient violence; at another, of ineffectual lenity! — The temporary want of sagacity in an ecclesiastical court, which was usually remarkable for political acuteness! — The increasing aptitude of men's minds to receive truth, in proportion as events occurred to mature it! — Some who loved learning, and were indifferent to religion, favouring the reformation as a cause connected with good letters; the old doctrines becoming united with the idea of ignorance, as the new ones were with that of knowledge! — The preparatory invention of printing, without which the

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revival

revival of learning would have been of little general use, and the dispersion of the Scriptures slow, and inconsiderable!—Some able and keen sighted men, working vigorously from a perception of existing abuses, who yet wanted sufficient zeal for the promotion of religious truth!

The pointed wit, the sarcastic irony, and powerful reasoning of Erasmus, together with his profound theological learning, directed against the corruptions of the Church, with such force as to shake the credit of the clergy, and be of the utmost service to that cause, which he wanted the righteous courage systematically to defend*! The unparalleled zeal, abilities, and inte-

* Every elegant scholar must naturally be an admirer of Erasmus. We should be sorry to incur the censure of any such by regretting, that the wit and indignation of this fine genius sometimes carried him too great lengths. Impiety, doubtless, was far from his heart, yet in some of his Colloquies, when he only professed to attack the errors of popery, religion itself is wounded by strokes which have such a tendency to prophaneness, as to give pain to the sober reader.

grity

grity of Luther! His bold genius, and adventurous spirit, not contenting itself, as the other reformers had done, with attacking notorious errors, and stigmatizing monstrous abuses; but sublimely exerted in establishing, or rather restoring the great fundamentals of Christianity!—While Erasmus, with that truly classic taste of which he was the chief reviver, so elegantly satirized the false views of God and religion, which the Romish church entertained, Luther's aim was to acquire true scriptural notions of both. Ridicule served to expose the old religion, but something nobler was necessary to establish the new.—It was for Erasmus to shake to its foundation the monstrous system of indulgences; it remained for Luther to restore (not to invent) the doctrine of salvation by remission of sins through a Mediator.—While his predecessors, and even co-adjutors, had been satisfied with pulling down the enormous mass of corruptions, the mighty hand of the

Saxon reformer not only removed the rubbish, but erected a fair fabric of sound doctrine in its place. The new edifice arose in its just symmetry, and derives impregnable strength, in consequence of its having been erected on a broad foundation. Nothing short of the ardour of Luther could have maintained this great cause in one stage, while perhaps the discreet temperance of Melancthon was necessary to its support in another!—The useful violence of Henry in attacking the pope with a zeal as furious as if he himself had not been an enemy to the reformation, exhibiting a wonderful illustration of that declaration of the Almighty, that *the fierceness of man shall turn to his praise!*—The meek wisdom of Cranmer, by which he was enabled to moderate the otherwise uncontrollable temper of his royal master!—The undaunted spirit and matchless intrepidity of Elizabeth, which effectually struggled for, and finally established it! These and a thousand other
concurring

concurring circumstances furnish the most unclouded evidence, to every mind not blinded by prejudice, that the divine **AUTHOR** of Christianity was also, though by the agency of human means and instruments, the **RESTORER** of it.

CHAP. XXXVI.

On the Importance of Religious Institutions and Observances.—They are suited to the Nature of Christianity, and particularly adapted to the Character of Man.

THAT torrent of vices and crimes which the French Revolution has disembogued into society, may be so clearly and indisputably traced to the source of infidelity, that it has, in a degree, become fashionable to profess a belief in the truths, and a conviction of the value of Christianity. But, at the same time, it has too naturally happened, that we have fallen into the habit of defending religion, almost exclusively, on political and secular grounds; as if Christianity consisted merely in our not being atheists or anarchists. A man, however, may be removed many stages from the impiety of French infidels, and yet be utterly destitute of real religion.

Many,

Many, not openly profane, but even entertaining a respect for the political uses of religion, have a way of generalizing their ideas, so as to dismiss revelation from the account.—Others again, who in this last respect agree with the former class, affect a certain superiority over the low contracted notions of churchmen and collegians. These assert, that, if virtue be practised, and public order preserved, the motive on which the one is practised, and the other maintained, is not worth contending for. Many there are, who, without formally rejecting Christianity, talk of it at large, in general, or in the abstract. As if it were at once to exempt themselves from the trouble of religion, and to escape the infamy of Atheism, these men affect to think so highly of the Supreme Being, whose temple is universal space, that he needs not be worshipped in temples made with hands. And, forgetting that the world which he thought it worth while to create, he will certainly think it worth while to govern, they assert, that

that he is too great to attend to the concerns of such petty beings as we are, and too exalted to listen to our prayers ;—that it is a narrow idea which we form of his divine attributes, to fancy that one *day* or one *place* is more acceptable to him than another ;—that all religions are equally pleasing to God, provided the worshipper be sincere ;—that the establishment of a public ministry is perhaps a good expedient of political wisdom, for awing the vulgar ; but that every man is his own priest ;—that all errors of opinion are innocent ; and that the Almighty is too just to punish any man for speculative tenets.

But, these lofty contemners of institutions, observances, days, ordinances, and priests, evince, by their very objections, that they are not more ignorant of the nature of God, as he has been pleased to reveal himself in Scripture, than of the character of man, to whose dispositions, wants, desires, distresses, infirmities, and sins, the spirit of Christianity, as unfolded
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in the Gospel, is so wonderfully accommodated. This admirable congruity would be of itself sufficient, were there no other proof, to establish the divine authority of our religion.—Private prayer, public worship, the observation of the Sabbath, a standing ministry, sacramental ordinances, are all of them so admirably adapted to those sublimely-mysterious cravings of the mind, which distinguish man from all inferior animals, by rendering him the subject of hopes and fears, which nothing earthly can realize or satisfy, that it is difficult to say, whether these sacred institutions most bespeak the wisdom, or the goodness of that supreme benefactor, who alone could have thus applied a remedy, because he alone could have penetrated the most hidden recesses of that nature which required it.—Religion, in fact, is not more essential to man, than, in the present state of things, those appointments are essential to religion. And, accordingly, we see, that when they are rejected, however its unprofitable generalities

ralities may be professed, religion itself, practically, and in detail, is renounced. Nor can it be kept alive in creatures so abounding in moral, and so exposed to natural evil, by mere metaphysical distinctions, or a bare intellectual conception of divinity. In beings whose minds are so liable to wander, religion, to be sustained, requires to be substantiated and fixed, to be realized, and invigorated. Conscious of our own infirmity, we ought to look for every outward aid to improve every internal grace; and consequently, ought gladly to submit to the control of habits, and the regularity of institutions. Even in the common pursuits of life, our fugitive and unsteady thoughts require to be tied down by exercises, duties, and external circumstances. And while the same expedients are no less necessary to insure the outward observances of religion, instead of obstructing, they promote its spirituality; for they are not more fitted to attract the senses of the ignorant, than they are to engage the thoughts,

thoughts, and fix the attention, of the enlightened. While, therefore, in order to get rid of imaginary burdens, and suspected penalties, men are contending for a philosophical religion, and an imaginary perfection, of which the mind, while incorporated with matter, is little capable, they lose the benefit of those salutary means and instruments, so admirably adapted to the state of our minds, and the constitution of our nature;—Means and instruments, which, on a sober inquiry into their origin, will be found as awfully sanctioned, as they are obviously failable;—in a word, which will be found, and this, when proved, puts an end to the controversy, to be the appointments of God himself.

The Almighty has most certainly declared, that he will be worshipped in spirit and in truth. But, does it therefore follow, that he will not be worshipped in *Churches*?—We know that *all* our days are his, and for the use of all we are accountable to him. But, does this invalidate the

duty of making *Sunday* more peculiarly his?—We are commanded to “pray without ceasing; in every thing to give thanks;” that is, to carry about with us a heart disposed to pray, and a spirit inclined to thankfulness; but, is this any argument against our enjoining on ourselves certain stated times of more regular prayer, and fixed periods of more express thanksgiving? Is it not obvious, that the neglect of the religious observance of *Sunday*, for example, results, in fact, from an irreligious state of the heart, however gravely philosophic reasons for the omission may be assigned? Is it not obvious also, that the very recurrence of appointed seasons serves to stir us up to the performance of the duties allotted to them? The philosopher may deride this as a mechanical religion, which requires to have its springs wound up, and stands in need of external impulses to set it a-going. But the Christian feels, that though he is neither to regulate his devotions by his crucifix, nor to calculate them

them by his beads, yet, while his intellectual part is encumbered with a body, liable to be misled by temptation without, and impeded by corruption within, he stands in need of every supplemental aid to remind, to restrain, and to support him. These, therefore, are not helps which superstition has devised, or fallible man invented. Infinite wisdom, doubtless, foreseeing that what was left dependant on the choice of mutable human will to be observed, would probably not be observed at all, did not leave such a duty to such a contingency, but established these institutions as part of his written word; the lawgiver himself also sanctioning the law by his own practice.

It would be well if these men of large views and philosophical conceptions, would consider, if there be nothing in the very structure of the human mind, we had almost said, in the very constitution of nature, which might lead us to expect, that religion *would* have those grosser, and more substantial parts and relations, which we have

have represented; instead of being that entirely thin and spiritual essence, of which they vainly dream.—It was reserved for a philosopher of our own nation to shew, that the richest possessions of the most capacious mind are only the well arranged and variegated ideas which originally entered in through the medium of the senses, or which we derive from contemplating the operations of our own minds, when employed on those ideas of sensation.—But, if material bodies are the sources from whence general knowledge is derived, why is every thing to be incorporeal which respects religion? If innate ideas have no existence in the human mind, why are our religious notions not to be derived from external objects?

Plato, the purest of heathen philosophers, and the nearest to those who derived their light from Heaven, failed most essentially in reducing his theory to practice. He seems to have supposed, that we possess certain ready-framed notions of every thing
essential

essential to moral happiness; and that contemplation of the *chief good*, and subjugation of animal nature, were all that was necessary to moral perfection. Is it not then most worthy of attention, that the holy Scripture differs from the plan of the Grecian sage, just where he himself differs from truth and nature, as developed by their most accurate observer, the sagacious and venerated Locke? Man, according to this profound reasoner, derives the original stock of his ideas from objects placed in his view, which strike upon his senses. Revelation, as if on this very principle, presents to man impressive objects. From the creation to the deluge, and still more from the call of Abraham, when we may say that our religion commences, to the giving of the Holy Ghost, after our Saviour's ascension, the period in which we may deem its character completed, we are instructed, in a great measure, by a series of *FACTS*.—In the earlier period, especially, we do not meet with theoretic descriptions of the

divine nature; but we see the eternal God himself, as with our mind's eye, visibly manifesting himself to the patriarchs, exemplifying his attributes to their senses, and by interpositions the most impressive, both in a way of judgment and of mercy, training them to apprehend him, in the mode of all others the most accommodated to the weakness of human nature.

Thus we see a religion, in some degree, *a matter of fact religion*, growing gradually to its completion; until "he, who, at sundry times and in divers manners, had spoken to the fathers by the prophets, spoke in these last days by his Son."

And, thus we observe the first preachers of Christianity, not philosophizing on abstract truths, but plainly bearing witness to what had been transacted in their presence.—"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." And, again—"That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you."

This

This then, is the particular characteristic of Christianity, that from its origin to its final consummation, it considers *man* critically *as he is*; and, that is, not as he was deemed by the most enlightened sages of earlier times, but as he has been discovered to be, by one of the most penetrating minds in the world, seventeen hundred years after the Christian æra. To this, now universally acknowledged notion of man, every thing is adapted, both in what is recorded and what is enjoined in the Scripture. Every observance relates to *facts*, and is fitted to impress them. To strip Christianity, therefore, of any of the observances, which are really of scriptural appointment, would be to subliminate it into philosophical inefficacy. In common life we see the affections little engaged in abstract speculation. They then only are moved when those sensible images, which the laws of nature have made moving, are aptly presented to them.

What, for example, could all the mathematical truth in the world do, in exciting

our affections, compared with a tale of human misery, or human magnanimity, even though known to be fabricated for our amusement?—When Christianity then is so obviously, in a great measure, a business of the affections, that we are then only under its influence, when we *love and delight in*, as well as *assent to*, or *reason upon* its principles;—shall we cavil at that religion which alone accomplishes its end, on account of those very features of it, which, on every ground of philosophy, and by every proof of efficacy, were the fact to be candidly investigated, render it such as it must be, in order to answer its purpose?

There cannot be a more conclusive internal evidence of our holy religion than this, that in every principle which it establishes, in every lesson which it inculcates, and in every example which it offers, there is throughout one character that invariably prevails, which is, the truest and soundest *good sense*. The Scripture, while, in the main, so plain and simple, “ that he may

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run that readeth," has accordingly been ever most prized by its profoundest and most sagacious readers. And the longer and more attentively such persons have studied it, the higher has their estimation risen. We will not adduce cases from that constellation of shining lights, the learned churchmen, whose testimony might be objected to, from the very circumstance which ought to enhance its value, their professional attachment, because the naming of Bacon, Boyle, and Locke is sufficient.

It will be found on the most impartial scrutiny, that that plan or practice which is clearly opposed to Scripture, is no less really hostile to right reason, and the true interests of man. And it is scarcely to be doubted, that if we could investigate the multiform history of individuals in the Christian world, it would be indisputable, that a deep impression of scripture facts and principles had proved, beyond comparison, the most successful preservative against the worst evils of human life.

Doubtless, it has been found most difficult to *retain* such an impression amid the business, and pleasures, and entanglements of the world; but so far as it has been retained, it has been uniformly the pledge of regularity in the conduct, peace in the mind, and an honourable character in society.—Thus much by way of introduction to the following chapter.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Of the established Church of England.

CHRISTIANITY then only answers its end, when it is established as a paramount principle in the heart, purifying the desires and intentions, tranquilizing the temper, enlarging the affections, and regulating the conduct. But, though this alone be its perfect work, it has subordinate operations, which are not only valuable for their direct results, but seem, in the order of Providence, to be preliminary to its more inward and spiritual efficacy.

When we observe how extensive is the outward profession of Christianity, and how obviously limited is a consistently Christian practice; the first emotion of a serious mind is naturally that of regret. But a more considerate view will give occasion to other feelings. It will be seen, that that

outward profession of our holy religion, which is secured by an establishment, is an inestimable blessing to a community; that the public benefits which result from it are beyond reckoning, besides the far greater utility of affording to each individual, that light of information, and those means of religious worship, which, duly used, will ensure his eternal salvation.

That there should therefore be a *visible*, as well as an *invisible* church, an instituted, as well as a personal religion, and that the one should embrace whole communities, while the other may extend to a comparative few, appears not only the natural consequence of Christianity, as a religious profession, spreading through society, and necessarily transmitted from father to son, but it seems also that kind of arrangement which divine wisdom would sanction, in order to the continuance of Christianity in the world.

Thus much would rational reflection dictate on a view of the case; but we are not
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not left to our own mere reasonings. What in itself appears so probable, our Saviour has intimated to us, as an essential part of the divine plan, in several of his parables. What is the leaven hid in the three measures of meal, but real Christianity, operating in those happy individuals whose hearts and lives are governed by its influence? And what again is the mass of meal with which the leaven is blended, but the great body of mankind, who, by God's gracious Providence, have been led to assume the Christian profession, and thus to constitute that visible church, whose mixed character is again shewn in the subsequent parables of the net cast into the sea, as well as in that of the wheat and the tares.

If, then, the public profession of Christianity be thus explicitly sanctioned by the divine wisdom; if, also, our own daily experience shews it to be most beneficial to society, as well as obviously conducive to the inward and spiritual purposes of our religion;

religion; we must admit, that the establishment which evidently secures such profession, is an object of inestimable value. It was necessary in the order of nature, that what was to impregnate the world, should be first itself prepared and proved.—For three centuries, therefore, it pleased God to leave Christianity to make its way, by its own mere strength, that by its superiority, both to the allurements and the menaces of the world, to all that could be desired, and to all that could be suffered by man, its true nature, and its genuine energy, might be for ever demonstrated; and its efficacy to assimilate, at length, the whole world to itself, be evinced, by its resistless growth, in circumstances the most apparently desperate.

During this period; therefore, such instruments alone were used as might serve to evince most clearly, that the “excellency of the power was of God, and not of men.” But when the season had arrived when the intermixture was to be extensively pro-

moted, then another and very different agency was resorted to; when the world was to be brought into the visible church, then the powers of the world received that impulse from the hand of Heaven, which made them, in a deeper sense than ever before, "ministers of God for good."—Then, for the first time, Kings and Princes embraced the profession of Christianity, and enjoined it by laws and edicts, as well as by still better methods, on the great body of their subjects.

How far the national changes which then took place were voluntary or necessitated, there is no occasion for us to inquire.—“The good which is done upon the earth, God doeth it himself.” And what good, next to the actual giving of the Gospel, has been greater than the providential blending of the leaven of Christianity with the great mass of human society? If the first generation of those nominal Christians were even pagans in their hearts, that did not lessen the greatness of the benefit to posterity

posterity.—They passed away, and their paganism passed away along with them: and the light of Christianity, invaluable in its immediate, but infinitely more so in its ultimate consequences, became the entailed possession of these European nations, under the double guarantee of popular attachment, and political power.

Such was the providential origin of religious establishments. Let those who object to them, only keep in their view, that chain of events by which the Christian profession was made national in any country; let them also inquire the fate of Christianity in those countries, where either no such establishments took place, or where they were overthrown by the ascendancy of the Mahometan potentates.—Lastly, let them reflect on the benefit and the comfort of that one single effect of “Kings becoming nursing-fathers, and Queens nursing-mothers,” of the visible Church,—*the legal enforcement of the Christian sabbath*,—and then see on what grounds, as friends to

good order, as honest citizens, or as consistent Christians, they can oppose or condemn so essential and so effectual an instrument of the best blessings which human kind can enjoy?

If then the *national establishment* of Christianity, even under the most disadvantageous circumstances, became the source of invaluable benefits and blessings; what estimate ought to be formed of *that Christian establishment in particular*, which, on the most impartial survey of all similar institutions which have been known in the Christian world, will be found the most admirably fitted for its purpose?

The established Church of England may not, it is true, bear a comparison with theoretic perfection, nor will it gain the approbation of those who require, that a visible should possess the qualities of an invisible church, and that every member of a national institution should equal in piety certain individual Christians; nor, in any point of view, can its real character be ascertained,

certained, or its just claims be established, except it be contemplated, as a *fixed institution*, existing from the period of the reformation to the present day, independently of the variations and discordances of the successive multitudes who adhered to it.

Let it then, under this only fair notion of it, be compared with all the other national churches of the reformation, and, on such a comparative view, its superiority will be manifest. The truth is, our church occupies a kind of middle place; neither multiplying ceremonies, nor affecting pompousness of public worship with the Lutheran church, nor rejecting all ceremonies and all liturgical solemnity with the church of Geneva;—a temperament thus singular, adopted and adhered to, in times of unadvanced light and much polemical dissension, amid jarring interests and political intrigues, conveys the idea of something more excellent than could have been expected from mere human wisdom.

A national establishment is ill-fitted for
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its purpose, if it present nothing striking to the external senses or imagination. In order to answer its design, it ought at once to be so outwardly attractive, as to attach the great mass of professing Christians to its ordinances; and yet the substance of these ordinances should be so solid and rational, and so spiritual, as to be fitted to the farther and still more important purpose of infusing inward vital Christianity. These characters, we conceive, are exhibited in the Anglican church in a degree unexampled in any other Christian establishment. She alone avoids all extremes. Though her worship be wisely popular, it is also deeply spiritual; though simple, it is sublime. She has rejected pompous ceremonies, but she has not therefore adopted an offensive negligence. In laying aside all that was ostentatious, she retained all that is solemn and affecting. Her reasonable service peculiarly exemplifies the apostle's injunction of praying with the understanding as well as with the heart. To both these the chief

chief attention is directed, while the imagination and the senses are by no means excluded from regard. It is our Saviour's exquisitely discriminating rule applied to another subject :—" These," says he, (the weightier matters,) " ye ought to have *done*, and not to leave the others *undone*."

If these remarks had nothing but opinions to support them, a different opinion might no less fairly be opposed to them. But let a matter of fact question be asked. Which of the protestant establishments has best answered its end?—In other words—in which of the protestant countries in Europe, have the fundamental truths of Scripture been most strictly adhered to, and the Christian religion most generally respected?—If we inquire into the present circumstances of protestant Europe, shall we not find that, in one class of churches on the continent, the more learned of the clergy commonly become Socinians ; while, among the clergy of the other, there appears a strange tendency towards absolute deism?—Amongst
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the laity of both churches, French principles, it may be feared, have so much prevailed, as to become in a great measure their own punishment.—For to what other cause but a departure from the faith of their fathers, can we ascribe their having so totally lost the ardour and resolution, which once distinguished their communities? Infidelity takes from the collective body its only sure cement, and from the individual his only certain source of courage. It leaves the mass of the people without *that* possession to be defended, in which all ranks and degrees are alike interested; and takes from the individual that *one* principle which alone can, at all times, raise a human being above his natural weaknesses, and make him superior both to pleasure and pain. While religion was an object with the people alluded to, it inspired the lowest, as well as the highest, with a zeal to defend their country against invaders, who, if predominant, would have robbed them of their religious liberty.—But now, concern

for religion being too generally cooled; they prefer the most disgraceful ease to exertions which would necessarily demand self-denial, and might deprive them of that only existence for which infidels *can* be concerned.

Why is it otherwise in England? Why are not we also overspread with pernicious principles, and sunk in base pusillanimity? The Germans were once as brave, the Swiss once as religious as any of us; but bravery and religion seem, as far as we can learn, to have abandoned some of those countries together. In England, blessed be God! things present a very different aspect. We have indeed much to lament, and much, very much, to blame; but infidelity does not *triumph*, nor does patriotism decline. Why is it thus? Is it not because the temperament of the English establishment has left no room for passing from one extreme to another; because its public service is of that sterling excellence, which must ever be attractive to the impressive

pressible mind, edifying to the pious mind, unimpeachable by the severest reasoner, and awful even to the profligate?

For, in enumerating the merits of our admirable establishment, we must not rest in the superiority of her *forms*, excellent as they are, but must extend the praise, where it is so justly due, to the still more important article of her doctrines. For after all, it is her luminous exhibition of Christian truth, that has been the grand spring and fountain of the good which she has produced. It is the spirituality of her worship,—it is the rich infusion of Scripture*,—it is the deep confessions of sin,—it is the earnest invocations of mercy,—it is the large enumeration of spiritual wants, and the abundant supply of correspondent blessings, with which her liturgy

* Of the vast importance of this one circumstance, an early proof was given. "Cranmer," says the learned author of the Elements of Christian Theology, "found the people so improved by hearing the Epistles and Gospels, as to be brought to bear the alterations which he had provided."

abounds, that are so happily calculated to give the tone of piety to her children.

In forming this invaluable liturgy, there was no arrogant self-conceit on the one hand, no relinquishment of strict judgment on the other. The errors of the Romish Church were to be rejected, but the treasures of ancient piety which she possessed, were not to be abandoned. Her formulas contained devotional compositions, not more venerable for their antiquity, than valuable for their intrinsic excellence, being at once simple and energetic, perspicuous and profound. What then was more suitable to the sober spirit of reformation, than to separate those precious remnants of ancient piety from their droffy accompaniments,—and, while these last were deservedly cast away, to mould the pure gold which remained into a new form, fitted at once to interest, and to edify the public mind?

It is worthy of observation, that in all reforms, whether civil or religious, wise and
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good men prove themselves to be such, by this infallible criterion, that THEY NEVER ALTER FOR THE SAKE OF ALTERING, but in their zeal to introduce improvements, are conscientiously careful to depart no further from established usages, than strict duty and indispensable necessity require.

Instead, therefore, of its being any stigma on our church service, that it was collected from breviaries and missals, it adds substantially to its value. The identity of true Christian piety, in all ages, being hereby demonstrated, in a way as satisfactory to the judgment, as it is interesting to the heart. In such a procedure, Christian liberty was united with Christian sobriety; primitive piety with honest policy.—A whole community was to be attached to the new mode of worship, and, therefore, it was expedient to break their habits no more than Christian purity demanded.—They only, however, who actually compare those of our prayers, which are selected from Romish formularies, with the originals,

can form a just idea with what discriminative judgment the work was executed, and what rich improvements are often introduced into the English collects, so as to heighten the sentiment, yet, without at all impairing the simplicity. Indeed, the wisdom and moderation of the founders of our church were equally conspicuous in the whole of their proceedings; never *strenuously* contending for any points, not even in that summary of Christian doctrines which was to be the established standard, but for such as affected the grand foundations of faith, hope, and charity.

How honourable to our reformers, and to the glorious work in which they so successfully laboured, that in the very first formation of the English church, that care to distinguish between essentials and non-essentials should be so strictly exercised, which the brightest philosophical luminary in his own, or perhaps in any age, some years after, so strongly recommended, and so beautifully illustrated. "We see Moses,"
says

says Lord Bacon, "when he saw the Israelite and the Egyptian fight, he did not say, why strive ye? but drew his sword and slew the Egyptian. But when he saw two Israelites fight, he said, you are *brethren*, why strive you? If the point of doctrine be an Egyptian, it must be slain by the sword of the spirit; but if it be an Israelite, though in the wrong, then, why strive you? We see of the fundamental points Christ penneth the league: thus:—*he that is not against us is for us**. But of points not fundamental thus,—*he that is not against us is with us*.

To the eternal praise then of our reformers, as well as with the deepest gratitude to God, be it said, that, in their concern for matters of faith, in which concern they yielded to none of their contemporaries, they intermingled a charity in which they have excelled them all. And, in consequence of this radical and truly Christian liberality, a noble spirit of tolerance has ever been the characteristic of genuine

* Lord Bacon on the Advancement of Learning, Book second.

Church of England divines : of those, I mean, who have cordially agreed with the first reformers, and wished no deviation from their principles, either in doctrine or in worship ; desiring neither to add to, nor diminish, the comely order which *they* had established in the public service ; nor to be dogmatical where *they* had been enlarged ; nor relaxed where *they* had been explicit :—yet, ready at all times to indulge the prejudices of their weaker brethren, and to grant to others that freedom of thought, of which, in their own case, they so fully understood the value. Our first reformers were men of eminent piety, and, happily for the interests of genuine religion, far less engaged in controversy than the divines of the continent. Even those of their own nation, who differed from them in lesser points, and with whom they *did* debate, were men of piety also, and entirely agreed with them in doctrines. Hence, the strain of preaching, in our Church of England divines, became less polemical and more pious

pious and practical, than that of the clergy of other churches. To this end the book of Homilies was highly conducive, being an excellent model which served to give the example of useful and practical preaching. In this most important particular, and in that of deep and conclusive reasoning, we may assign the decided superiority to English divines, above all those of the continent, though the latter may perhaps, in some instances, dispute with them the palm of eloquence.

From divines of the above character, happily never wanting in any age, our national establishment has ever derived its best strength at home, and its honour and credit in foreign countries. These have made the Anglican church looked up to, by all the churches of the reformation. Their learning has been respected, their wisdom has been esteemed, their liberality has been loved and honoured, their piety has been revered, by all of every protestant communion who were capable of discern-
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ing and improving excellence ; nay, even in the Romish communion, they have sometimes excited a degree of estimation, which nothing could have called forth but the most indisputable superiority.

But, it is not only in the clerical order that the kindly influences of the English establishment have been manifest ; they appear in the brightest point of view, in those illustrious laymen, whose labours have contributed not less to raise the British name, than the achievements, unexampled as they have been, of our armies or our navies. On account of these men, we have been termed by foreigners, a nation of philosophers ; and, for the sake of their writings, English has become, not so much a fashionable as, what is far more honourable, a kind of learned language in almost every country of Europe.—Yet, in no writers upon earth, has a sense of religion been more evidently the very key-stone of their excellence. This it is which gives them that sobriety of mind, that intellectual con-

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scientiousness,

scientificness, that penetrating pursuit, not of subtlety, but of truth; that decorous dignity of language, that cordiality as well as sublimity of moral sentiment and expression, which have procured for them, not merely the suffrage of the understanding, but the tribute of the heart.

And let it be attentively inquired, how they came by this rare qualification? how it happened that in them, so much more strikingly than in the learned and philosophical of perhaps any other nation, increase of knowledge did not generate scepticism, nor the consciousness of their mental strength inspire them with contempt for the religion of their country? Was it not, that that religion was so modified, as equally to endear itself to the vivid sensibility of youth, the quick intelligence of manhood, the matured reflection of age and wisdom? That it did not, on the one hand, conceal the beauty and weaken the strength of vital truth, by cumbrous and unnecessary adjuncts;—nor, on the other hand, withhold
from

from it that graceful drapery, without which, in almost all instances, the imagination, as it were, instinctively, refuses to perform its appropriate function of conveying truth to the heart !—And further, have not the above invaluable effects been owing to this also, that the inherent spirit of Christian tolerance, which has been described, as distinguishing our communion from every other national communion in the world, by allowing to their minds every just claim, has taken the best possible method of preventing intellectual licentiousness? In fine, to what other causes than those just stated, can we ascribe it, that this country, above all others, has been the seat of philosophy, unbounded in its researches, yet modest in its assumptions, and temperate in its conclusions?—Of literary knowledge, not only patiently pursued, and profoundly explored, but wisely digested, and usefully applied?—Of religion, in its most rational, most influential, most Christian shape and character ;—not the dreary labour of superstition,

rition, not the wild delirium of fanaticism, but the infallible guide of reason, the invincible guard of virtue, the enjoyment of present peace, and the assurance of future happiness?

But, whatever providential causes have hitherto contributed among us to restrain infidelity and prophaneness, have we no reason to fear, that their operations are growing less and less powerful? And should we not bear in mind, that it is not the *form* of our church establishment, incomparable as that is, which can alone arrest the progress of danger, if there should arise any declension of zeal in supporting its best interests, if ever there should be found any lack of knowledge for zeal to work with. The character also of the reigning Prince: will always have a powerful effect either in retarding or accelerating the evil.

: One of our most able writers on history and civil society*, is perpetually inculcating, that no political constitution, no laws, no

* Ferguson.

provision made by former ages, can ever secure the actual enjoyment of political happiness and liberty, if there be not a zeal among the living for the furtherance of these objects. Laws will be misconstrued and fall into oblivion, and ancient maxims will be superseded, if the attention of the existing generation be not alive to the subject.

Surely it may be said at least with equal truth, that no excellence of our religious establishment, no orthodoxy in our articles, no, nor even that liturgy on whose excellencies we have delighted to expatiate, can secure the maintenance of true religion, but in proportion as the religious spirit is maintained in our clergy; in proportion as it is diffused among the people; in proportion as it is encouraged from the throne.

If such then be the value, and such the results of the English ecclesiastical establishment, how high is the destiny of that personage, whom the laws of England recognize

cognize as its supreme head on earth! How important is it, that the Prince, charged with such an unexampled trust, should feel its weight, should understand its grand peculiarities, and be habitually impressed with his own unparalleled responsibility. To misemploy, in any instance, the prerogative which this trust conveys, is to lessen the stability, and counteract the usefulness of the fairest and most beneficial of all the visible fabricks, erected in this lower world! But what an account would that Prince, or that minister have to render, who should *systematically* debase this little less than divine institution, by deliberately consulting, not how the Church of England may be kept high in public opinion, influential on public morals, venerable through the meek yet manly wisdom, the unaffected yet unblemished purity, the energetic yet liberal zeal of its clergy;—but, how it may be made subservient to the trivial and temporary interests of the prevalent party, and the passing hour?

Besides

Besides the distribution of dignities, and the great indirect influence which this affords the Prince, in the disposal of a vast body of preferment; his wisdom and tenderness of conscience will be manifested also in the appointment of the chancellor, whose church patronage is immense. And in the discharge of that most important trust, the appointment of the highest dignitaries, the monarch will not forget, that his responsibility is proportionably the more awful, because the exercise of his power is less likely to be controlled, and his judgment to be thwarted, than may often happen in the case of his political servants.

Nor will it, it is presumed, be deemed impertinent to remark, that the just administration of this peculiar power may be reasonably expected as much, we had almost said even more, from a female, than from a monarch of the other sex. The bishops chosen by those three judicious Queens, Elizabeth, Mary, and Caroline, were generally remarkable for their piety and learning.

ing. And let not the writer be suspected of flattering either the Queen or the Bishop by observing, that among the wisdom and abilities which now adorn the bench, a living prelate high in dignity, in talents, and in Christian virtues, is said to have owed his situation to the discerning piety of her present Majesty.

What an ancient Canon, cited by the judicious Hooker, suggests to bishops on the subject of preferment, is equally applicable to Kings.—*It expressly forbiddeth them to be led by human affection in bestowing the things of God* *.

* The Ecclesiastical Polity.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Superintendence of Providence manifested in the Local Circumstances, and in the Civil and Religious History of England.

Among the various subjects on which the mind of the royal pupil should be exercised, there is none more appropriate, than that which might, perhaps, be most fitly designated, *the providential history of England*. That it has not hitherto engaged attention, in any degree suitable to its importance, is much more an apology for its being, in the present instance, specially adverted to, than a reason for its being any longer neglected.

The marks of divine interference, in the general arrangement of states and empires, are rendered so luminous by the rays which Scripture prophecy has shed upon them, as to strike every mind, which is at once attentive and candid, with a force not to be resisted.

refuted. But, while this indisputable truth leads us necessarily to infer, that a like superintendence to that which is over the whole, acts likewise respecting all the separate parts; the actual tracing this superintendence, in the occurrences of particular nations, must, in general, be matter of difficulty and doubt, as that light of prophecy, which falls so brightly on the central dome of the temple, cannot reasonably be hoped for, when we turn into the lateral recesses.

There are instances, however, in which God's providential works shine so clearly "by their own radiant light," as to demonstrate the hand which fashioned, and the skill which arranged them. And though others are of a more doubtful nature; yet, when the attainments of any one particular nation become matter of general influence, so that what was, at first, the fruit of merely local labour, or the effect of a peculiar combination of local circumstances, becomes, from its obvious utility, or intrinsic excellence,

lence, an object to other surrounding countries, and grows at length into an universal benefit;—in such a distinction, we can hardly forbear to trace something so like a consistent plan of operations that the duty of observing and acknowledging it, seems incumbent on such communities as appear to have been thus signally favoured. What advantage, for instance, has the whole civilized world derived from the philosophizing turn of the ancient Greeks? How widely extensive, and how durable has been its influence!

Of what importance are the benefits, which the politic spirit of the Roman empire diffused amongst the countries of Europe, most of which, to this day, acknowledge the hand which reared them from barbarism, by still retaining those laws which that hand transcribed for them; as if Rome were allowed to do that for men's circumstances, which Greece was permitted to effect for their minds!

But

But a third instance is encumbered with less difficulty,—the designation of Judea to be the local source of true religion. In this small province of the Roman empire, what a scene was transacted, and from those transactions, what a series of consequences have followed, and what a system of influences has been derived, operating, and still to operate, on individuals—communities—nations—in ways, and with effects, the happiest, or the most awful, as they are embraced, or rejected; and leading to results, not to be calculated even as to this world,—but wholly inconceivable, as to that future world, where all the deep purposes of God are to have their perfect consummation!

But, if such has been the method of Providence in those great designs, which have heretofore been carried on in the world, can we suppose that the same plan is not substantially pursued in his present arrangements? Are not blessings still to be conferred on society? Blessings, yet in ge-

peral unknown, and greater measures of those which are already in part attained?—How rare, for example, has been hitherto the blessing of complete civil government—of such a political system, as combines the apparent contrarieties of public security with personal liberty! An object aimed at by the wisest legislators of earlier times, but regarded by them as a beautiful theory, incapable of being realized! Still more—How limited is the attainment of religious truth—of *well-weighed, well-digested religious belief*—and of *well-conceived, well-regulated divine worship*! Christianity exists in the Scripture, like virgin gold in the mine; but how few, comparatively, have been able to extract it without loss, or to bring it into public circulation without deplorable alloy! How erroneous, in most instances, are those modes and exercises of it, which are adopted by states and governments; and how seldom does it seem rightly apprehended, even by the most enlightened individuals! To suppose things

will always remain in this state, is little short of an imputation on divine wisdom. But, in the mean time, how disastrous are the consequences to individuals and to society!

If there be then a country, long and signally distinguished in both these important instances—in the former, so as to have been the object of universal admiration;—in the latter, so as to have been looked up to, by all the most enlightened parts of the Christian world.—If there be such a country, can we help regarding its superiority to other countries, as the result of a providential destination, as clear as that which allotted philosophy to ancient Greece, and civil polity to ancient Rome?—And may it not even be added, as really divine, though not miraculous, as that which gave true religion to ancient Judea?

If England be this community, if England be the single nation upon earth,—where that checked and balanced government,—that temperament of monarchic,

aristocratic, and popular rule, which philosophic statesmen, in ancient times, admired so much in theory, has been actually realized.—If it be also distinguished by a temperament in religious concerns little less peculiar, is not every thinking member of such a community bound to acknowledge with deepest gratitude, so extraordinary a distinction? And what employment of thought can be more interesting, than to trace the providential means, by which such unexampled benefits and blessings have been conferred upon our country?

To enter at large into so vast a subject, would be an impracticable attempt, on such an occasion as the present. It would itself furnish materials for a volume rather than for a few pages*; and to treat it with justice

* The train of thought pursued in this and the following chapter, as well as some of the thoughts themselves, both here, and in one or two former passages, may perhaps be recognized by the Rev. and learned Doctor Miller, late fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, as a-kin to those views of providential history,

justice would be a task, to which the best informed and profoundest mind would alone be competent. A few scattered observations, therefore, are all that we can pretend to offer, not however without hope, that they will excite to a deeper and more extended investigation. We are told by Saint Paul, that "he who made of one blood all nations, fixed not only the times before appointed (the epochs of their rise and fall), but also the bounds of their habitation." The result of this creative arrangement, respecting the greater divisions of the earth, Europe, Asia, and Africa, separated, yet connected by that inland ocean the Mediterranean Sea, have been already noticed. But, nothing has been more pregnant in its consequences in this general plan, than the insulated situation of Great Britain, with

tory, which he has given in a course of lectures in that College. The author gladly acknowledges having received, through a friend, a few valuable hints from this source, of which it is earnestly hoped the public may in due time be put in full possession.

respect

respect to our national circumstances.—If we are at this day free, while so many neighbouring nations are enslaved.—If we stand erect, while they are trampled on—let us not entirely attribute it to any superiority in ourselves, of spirit, of wisdom, or strength; but let us also humbly and gratefully ascribe it to that appointment of the Creator, which divided us from the continent of Europe. Had we been as accessible to the arms of France, as Holland, Switzerland, or the Austrian Netherlands, we might perhaps have been involved in the same calamities. But we cannot stop here. The entire series of our history, as a nation, seems in a great measure to have been derived from this source; and every link in the chain of our fortune bears some significant mark of our local peculiarity. Without this, where would have been our commercial opulence, or our maritime power? If we had not been distinct as a country, we had not been distinct as a people. We might have

have imbibed the taints, been moulded by the manners, and immersed in the greatness of our more powerful neighbours. It was that goodness which made ~~us~~ an island, that laid the foundation of our national happiness. It was by placing us in the midst of the waters, that the Almighty prepared our country for those providential uses to which it has served, and is yet to serve in the great scheme of his dispensations. Thus, then, we behold ourselves raised as a nation above all the nations of the earth, by that very circumstance which made our country be regarded, two thousand years ago, only as a receptacle for the refuse of the Roman Empire!

To this, evidently, it has been owing, that, amongst us, the progress of society, from barbarism to high improvement, has not only been more regular, but more radical and entire, as to all the portions and circumstances of the body politic, than in any instance with which we are acquainted. Shut in from those desolating
blasts

blasts of war, which have ever and anon been sweeping the continent, the culture of our moral soil has been less impeded, and the seeds which have been sown have yielded ampler, as well as maturer harvests. We have had our vicissitudes—but in a manner peculiar to ourselves. They seem clearly providential, and not fortuitous; since it is certain that the agitations which we have experienced, and the apparent calamities which we have suffered, have been, in almost every instance, signally conducive to our advancement. When England became possessed by the Saxons, she appeared only to be sharing the fate of the other European countries; all of which, about that period, or soon after, became the prey of similar hordes of invaders. But a difference of result, in our particular instance, arising chiefly from our insular situation, after some time, presents itself to us, as already marking that happy destination with which Providence intended to favour us.

It has been observed by historians, that
when

when an army of those northern invaders took possession of any country, they formed their establishment with a view to self-defence, much more than to civil improvement. They knew not how suddenly they might be attacked by some successful army of adventurers; and therefore, says Dr. Robertson, "a feudal kingdom resembled a military establishment, rather than a civil institution." "Such a policy," adds the same historian, "was well calculated for defence, against the assaults of any foreign power; but its provisions for the interior order and tranquillity of society, were extremely defective; the principles of disorder and corruption being discernible in that constitution under its best and most perfect form *."

To this "feudal system," however, the newly established potentates of the continent seem to have been impelled by necessity; but an inevitable consequence was,

* Robertson's View of the State of Europe, prefixed to Charles V. Sect. I.

that

that that taste for liberty, which had animated their followers in their native forests, could no longer be cherished, and was of course doomed to extinction.

In Britain alone, such a necessity did not exist. The possession of the country being once accomplished, its tenure was comparatively secured by the surrounding ocean. Defence was not to be neglected; but danger was not imminent.—Thus no new habit was forced on the new settlers, so as to expel their original propensities; and accordingly, whatever means of safety they might have resorted to, against each other, during the multiplicity of these governments,—we see at the distance of four centuries, Alfred turning from successful warfare against invaders, to exercise that consummate wisdom, with which his mind was enriched, in systematizing those very aboriginal principles of Saxon liberty. A civil polity was thus erected, which was not only in its day the most perfect scheme of government that had yet existed, but
it

it also was formed of such materials, and established on such a solid foundation, as never after to be wholly demolished; until, at length, it has been gradually wrought into that magnificent fabric, which, through the blessing of heaven, is at this day the glory and the defence of our island.

In these rudiments, then, of the English constitution, let us gratefully recognize the first most striking indication of a particular providence presiding over our country. A genius, the first of his age, is raised in a remote and insulated part of Europe,—where, at first view, it might be thought his talents must be destitute of their proper sphere of action. But in what other European country could his enlarged views have been in any adequate degree realized?—Where the feudal government was established, such wise and liberal arrangements as those of Alfred were necessarily precluded; at least, they could not have been introduced, without stripping such a government of its essential characters;

Alfred's

Alfred's system being as strictly *civil*, as the other was *military*. He provided sufficiently for external safety, but it was internal security and tranquillity to which his exquisite policy was peculiarly directed. And from its correspondence with right reason, with the native spirit of the people, and with the local circumstances of the country, it so rooted itself in the English soil, as to out-live all the storms of civil discord, as well as the long winter of the Norman tyranny.

Is it not then remarkable, that when such a concurrence of favourable circumstances existed, in that very sequestered spot should arise an individual, so precisely fitted to turn them to, what appears, their allotted purpose? Had there not been an Alfred to accomplish the work, all these capabilities might soon have vanished, and our national happiness never have been realized.—On the other hand, had Alfred lived without his appropriate sphere of action, he would no doubt have been a successful warrior, a gracious Prince, and clearly, as far as the
the

purification, are procedures congruous with all the laws of nature.

In a constitution formed in so dark an age, and adapted to so rude a people, there could be little more than the crude elements of such a political system, as more advanced times would require. Yet had the enjoyment of those earlier privileges remained undisturbed, nothing better might have been aimed at; and instead of that progressive advance, with which we have been blessed, our nation might, at this day, have only been distinguished by a blind and stupid attachment to some obsolete forms of liberty, from which all substantial worth had long since departed.—For the prevention of such an evil, human foresight could make no provision; and we may now look back with wonder, on the wisdom, as well as efficacy, of the process. The original plan was guarded by the same gracious hand, until the habits induced by it were fixed in the minds of Englishmen;—then it was suspended, that they might struggle

to regain it; and by the activity thus excited, and more and more elicited by new competitions, they might at length attain to the highest civil and political happiness, which has been enjoyed in this imperfect state of being.

But, on a yet more enlarged view of our national progress, shall we not be led to conclude, that something more than the improvement of our political constitution was in the design of Providence, when the Norman dynasty became possessed of the throne? A far more important reformation, than that of human laws, or political systems, was at length to take place. And in this great ecclesiastical revolution, England was intended to act a conspicuous part. For this, even these preparatory steps would be necessary. And may we not clearly trace such steps from the epoch of which we are speaking?—The encroachments of the papal see had, till then, been comparatively little felt in England. But the Norman princes introduced foreign

bishops, who exercised in the church as galling a dominion, as that of their royal patrons in the state.—“The consciences of men,” says Sir William Blackstone, “were
 “enslaved by four ecclesiastics, devoted to
 “a foreign power, and unconnected with
 “the civil state under which they lived;
 “who now imported from Rome, for the
 “first time, the whole farrago of superstitious
 “novelties, which had been engendered
 “by the blindness and corruption of
 “the times, between the first mission of
 “Augustine the monk, and the Norman
 “conquest*.”

Had these pernicious practices been *gradually* and *insensibly* introduced, as they were in most countries on the continent, they would have been inevitably combined with the common habits of the people. But being thus suddenly and forcibly imposed, in conjunction too with such a mass of political grievances, their almost

* Blackstone's Commentaries, vol. IV. last chap.

necessary

necessary tendency was to excite a spirit of resistance. We accordingly find, that in every advance which was made towards regaining a free government, a conquest was gained over some instance of ecclesiastical as well as of political tyranny; than which, what more effectual course could the most sagacious foresight have pursued, for rousing the national mind from the dead drowsiness of superstition, and preparing it to give a cordial reception to that light of religious truth, which, when the proper season should arrive, was to beam forth with peculiar brightness on this favoured country?

But it is not only in its encroachments and severities that we are to regard the Norman government as an instrument of Providence. It, doubtless, was the means of much direct and positive good. The minds of Englishmen needed improvement, still more than their civil constitution. Alfred had attempted to sow the seeds of learning, as well as of jurisprudence,

amongst his countrymen; but to inspire a barbarous people with a love of literature, was what neither he nor his master, Charlemagne, was able in any great degree to accomplish. An advance of general civilization was necessary to strike out such a disposition; and it was not until toward the beginning of the 12th century, that any part of Western Europe appeared to have been visited with the dawn of an intellectual day. A connexion, therefore, with the continent, previously to that period, could not have served the moral, and might have injured the political interests of our island. But that it should, just at that time, be brought into such circumstances, as should ensure its participation in all the mental acquirements of the neighbouring countries, appears evidently to bespeak the same superintendence, as in the instances already noticed.

It is, however, in the great event of the English reformation, that we perceive, as has been already observed *, the most striking

* Chap. xxxv.

ing marks of divine direction ; and it seems to discover to us, why it has pleased God to distinguish us by so many previous instances of favour. We were not only to be blessed with the light of truth ourselves, but we were to be, in some sort, " a city set upon a hill." The peculiar temperament of the English protestant establishment, which places it in a kind of middle line between the churches of the continent, has been also noticed in a former chapter. But is it not evident, that our national church, humanly speaking, derived that temperament from a previously-formed national character ? " The English," says Voltaire, " into whom nature has infused a spirit of independence, adopted the opinions of the reformers, but mitigated them, and composed from them a religion peculiar to themselves *." It is seldom that, on such a subject, this acute but most perverted pen has so justly described the fact. But, what a striking testimony is this, not only

* Siècle de Louis XIV. Chap. xxxii.

to the worth of that national character, which thus distinguished itself from the whole Christian world, but also to the depth of that divine wisdom, which made so many remote and unconnected contingences work together in producing so valuable a result!

In establishing a religion, which is founded on truth, and which consists essentially in the love of God and man, what more suitable dispositions could there be provided, than an *independent spirit*, and a *mitigating temper*? That both these were eminently exemplified by our venerable reformers, need not here be proved. Nor is it necessary to enlarge upon the obvious tendency of the English laws and constitution, to form such dispositions in those who lived within their influence. If this tendency were doubtful, a striking fact in after-times might serve to illustrate it, I mean, that steady zeal with which all the great constitutional lawyers, during the agitations of the seventeenth century, endeavoured to preserve

deserve to the English church establishment that very temperament, which had so happily entered into its first formation. Nor can we pass over the care which was taken, in the very occurrences of the reformation, for adapting it to the *independent spirit* of the English, and also for perpetuating, in the establishment itself, that *mild and mitigating temper* which had influenced its first founders.

It was indispensable that the change in the church-establishment should be accomplished by the paramount powers of the state; they alone being either legally, or naturally competent. But no act of a king or council, or even of a parliament, was adequate to effect in the minds of the English public, that rational and cordial acquiescence in the new state of things, without which it must have been inefficient, as to influence, and insecure as to duration.

But for this, Providence itself made admirable provision. The pious and amiable Edward was kept upon the throne, until
all

all that was necessary to be done, in an external and political way, had been effected. Then, for a time, the old system was permitted to return, with all its horrible accompaniments, in order, as it should seem, that the protestant church of England might not rest upon human laws *alone*, but might appear to have originated in the same essential principles with those of the apostolic church, and to have been constituted by men of a like spirit, who, when called to it, were similarly prepared to seal their testimony with their blood.

The service that these illustrious men had done, by their temperate wisdom, and admirable judgment, in the reign of Edward, in compiling such a liturgy, and establishing such a worship, and such a form of doctrine, is ever to be had in grateful remembrance. But their passive virtue, their primitive heroism, in patiently, and even joyfully, dying for those truths, which they had conscientiously adopted; this it was which established protestantism

testantism in the hearts of the English populace! They saw the infernal cruelty of the popish leaders, and the calm magnanimity of the protestant martyrs. They saw these holy men, whose connexion with secular politics might be thought to have corrupted them, and whose high station in society might be supposed to have enervated them, facing death in its most dreadful form, with more than human tranquillity! They saw all this, and the impression made upon them was like that which was made on the Israelites at Mount Carmel, by the event of the memorable contest between the priests of Baal, and the prophets of the Lord!—Accordingly, on the death of Mary, the secession of Elizabeth excited universal joy. The acquiescence of the people in the changes made by Henry, and even by Edward, were little more than acts of necessity, and therefore implied no revolution in the general opinion. But *now* it was evinced, by every possible proof, that a thorough detestation of popery had extended
itself

itself through the whole community.—“Were we to adopt,” says Goldsmith, “the maxim of the catholics, that evil may be done for the production of good, one might say, that the persecutions in Mary’s reign were permitted only to bring the kingdom over to the protestant religion. The people had formerly been compelled to embrace it, and their fears induced them to conform, but now almost the whole nation were protestants from inclination.”—Nothing can surely be more just than the substance of this sentiment. The lively writer seems only to have forgotten, that we may ascribe to divine Providence, the permission of evil in order to greater good, without sanctioning any maxim, revolting in theory, or dangerous in practice.

CHAP. XXXIX.

The same Subject continued.—Tolerant Spirit of the Church.—Circumstances which led to the Revolution—and to the providential Succession of the House of Hanover.

THE circumstance attending the Reformation, which has been most regretted, was, that a portion of the protestants were dissatisfied with it, as not coming up to the extent of their ideas ; and that this laid the foundation of a system of dissent, which broke the uniformity of public worship, and led, at length, to a temporary overthrow, both of the ecclesiastical and civil constitution.

On these events, as human transactions, our subject does not lead us to enlarge. If the above remarks, with those in a foregoing chapter, on the peculiar characters of the English establishment, be just, these persons,

sions, however conscientious, were opposing, without being aware of it, an institution which, from its excellent tendency and effects, seems to have been sanctioned by Providence. But may not even their opposition, and subsequent dissent, be considered in the same light as those other transactions, which have been mentioned; that is, as permitted by the all-wise Disposer, in order to beneficial results, which could not in the nature of things, according to our conception, have been equally produced through any other instrumentality? For example: did it not supply the aptest means, which we can conceive, for answering the important purpose, which was mentioned above—the *perpetuating in the establishment itself, that mild and mitigating temper, which had so signally influenced its first founders.*

If Christian virtue be, in every instance, the result, and the reward, of conflict; and if each virtue be formed, as it were, out of the ruins of the opposite vice; then may:

we

we not deem it morally certain, that a Christian community, which God "delighted to honour," should, as well as individuals, have an opportunity suitable to its circumstances, of not being "overcome of evil," but "of overcoming evil with good?" And would it not, therefore, appear probable that, though it should possess that political strength, and that portion of outward dignity, which might be necessary to its efficiency as a national establishment, it should also have some opposition to encounter, some trials to sustain, some calumnies to surmount, some injuries to forgive? Would not such circumstances strengthen its claim to being deemed an integral part of the church militant, and would they not fit it for answering all the purposes of a Christian establishment, far better than if it had possessed that exclusive ascendancy, which should leave no room for the exercise of passive, and almost supersede the necessity even of active virtue?

That

That the schism, of which we speak, was permitted by Providence for some such purpose as that just described, appears probable, from the agreement of such an intension with that wise and temperate plan by which the Reformation had been effected;—from the obvious consistency of providing for the continuance of that moderate and mitigating temper of the first reformers;—and, above all, because it is evident that the event in question has actually answered this valuable purpose;—the most eminent divines of our church having been generally as much distinguished for candour towards those who differed from them, as for ability and firmness in maintaining their own more enlarged mode of conduct.

That they could not have so fully manifested these amiable and truly Christian qualities, in a state of things where there was nothing to call them forth, is self-evident: and it is almost as certain, that even their possession of such virtues must depend

depend upon their having had motives to exercise them. We accordingly perceive, in the lives and writings of the great luminaries of our church, not only a happy prevalence of liberal principles, and charitable feelings, but also the very protest, if we may so speak, by which these principles and feelings were formed. From having continually in their view a set of persons, who had *substantially* the same faith, yet differed in modes of worship; we see them acquiring a peculiar habit of distinguishing between the essentials and circumstantials of religion. Their judgment becomes strong, as their charity becomes enlarged, and above all other divines, perhaps, they investigate religion as philosophers, without injury to the humility of their faith, or the fervency of their devotion. In almost every other communion (though with some admirable exceptions), deep contemplative piety often appears associated with some sentiment or practice, which is apt to abate our estimation of the rationality of the party; or if

rationality be preserved, there is too often some diminution of the pious affections. And what proves, that, from the seeming evil of which we have spoken, God has by his over-ruling influence deduced this good, is, that the completest spirit of toleration, and this high description of character, have not only been commonly united, but that seasons which peculiarly called forth in churchmen the exercise of Christian forbearance, were also singularly fruitful in examples of this sublime and philosophic piety *.

In fact, whether we consider the circumstances under which the church of England was formed, the language in which she expresses her sense of the Christian doctrines, the spirit which pervades all her formularies, or the temper which has distinguished the first founders, and all their genuine successors; she evidently appears designed by Eternal Wisdom to have been a tolerant

* See bishop Burnet's History of his own Times.

church;

church ; and by being such, to be the means of serving the great cause of Christianity, in certain important instances, which could only be accomplished in a state of *religious liberty*. In too many other Christian countries, the established religion has appeared to rest *entirely* upon a political foundation. In consequence of this, men of lively talents have too generally, in such countries, become infidels. In England, the tolerant nature of the church establishment, in honourably maintaining, and giving the highest reverence to a national form of worship, but allowing individuals their unrestrained choice, has left religion itself to be a matter of reason and conviction, as really as it was in the primitive times : and the consequence has been, that reason and conviction have signally done their part. Infidels have made their utmost efforts, with every aid that perverted talent and misapplied learning could give to them ; but all they could accomplish, has been to call forth far more powerful minds

to defeat them with their own weapons ; and to demonstrate, that though the divine religion of the Gospel leans on political support, for the sake of greater public utility, yet its appropriate strength is that of *invariable reason, irrefragable truth, and self-evident excellence.*

And while the English establishment has thus served the general interests of religion, she has also most substantially served herself. Making her appeal to reason, she has been estimated accordingly ; and what she has not endeavoured to extort by force, has been greatly yielded to her from rational attachment. It was natural, that the toleration which was given, should, in so exclusive a community, be largely made use of. But this leaves room for the establishment to try its comparative fitness to attach more minds, in which, be it said without invidiousness, the result has at all times been such, as signally to strengthen whatever has been adduced to illustrate the high providential uses of the established church of England.

Still

Still, however, as the natural and proper tendency of the very best things may be thwarted by opposite influences, we ought to be aware, that the genuine tendency of the establishment to attach men's minds, and recommend itself by its own excellence, should not be trusted in so confidently, as that any of those to whom this precious deposit is committed should, from an idea that its influence cannot be weakened, become supine, while its enemies are alive and active. We do not mean, that they should oppose the adversaries of the church by acrimonious controversy, but by the more appropriate weapons of activity and diligence. We may reasonably presume, that the Almighty, having wrought such a work for us at the Reformation, will still continue his blessing, while the same means are employed to maintain which were used to establish it. But to this end every aid should be resorted to, every method should be devised, by which the great mass of the people may be brought to the public worship of the church. To one most important

358 DUTY OF INSTRUCTING THE POOR.

means we have already adverted *, and it cannot be too much insisted on—that the lower classes, among which the defection is greatest, should betimes receive an impression on their minds, not only of God's goodness and mercy, but of his *power* and *supremacy*; and also, that God is the real original authority by which “Kings reign, and Princes decree justice;” by which obedience and loyalty to government are enforced, and all the subordinate duties of life required of them. It is from the pulpit, undoubtedly, that every duty, both to God and man, is best inculcated, and with a power and sanction peculiar to itself; and it is the clergy that must prepare for God faithful servants and true worshippers; and for the King, a willing and obedient people.

But the clergy, however zealous, pious, and active, cannot find time to do all that might be done. A people might be prepared for the clergy themselves. The

* Chap. xviii.

minds

minds of children should be *universally* familiarized with the moving stories, and their affections excited by the amiable characters, in the Bible. When the beautiful allegories of the New Testament have been not only studied, but properly interpreted to them ; when their memories have been stored with such subjects and passages as constantly occur in preaching, the service of the church, by becoming more intelligible, will become more attractive. And as we have already observed, with their religious instructions, there should be mixed a constant sense of the excellence of *their own church*, the privileges of belonging to it, the mischief of departing from it, the duties which lie upon them as members of it. They should be taught the nature of the government of this church, the authority from which it is derived, and their duty and obligations, not as children only, but through life, to its ministers. They should be taught what all the offices and institu-

ious of the church means ; that none of them are empty ceremonies, but arrangements of genuine wisdom, and to be valued and used accordingly.

We will venture to say, that were such a mode of training the lower classes *every where* adopted, they would then, not *occasionally*, fall in with the stream on Sundays, and be mixed, they know not why, with a congregation of customary worshippers ; but they would come with ability to understand, and dispositions to prefer the established mode of worship ; their ideas and sentiments would readily mix and assimilate with what they saw and heard. And thus an habitual veneration, both for the church and its pastors, would be an additional preparation for the gradual influence of real religion on their minds.—But while these modes of instruction may be maintained by the leisure and the liberality of the laity, the clergy must be the life, and soul, and spirit of them.

But

But to return.—Perhaps, in a fair view of the importance of that truly Christian liberty, which, ever since the Revolution of 1688, has been established in England, it might be doubted, whether this was not the ultimate object, on account of which, the civil rights of the English community were so providentially fostered. Certain it is, that at every period of our history, when an advance is made in civil matters, some step appears generally to have been gained in ecclesiastical concerns also ; and the completion of the one is equally that of the other. But it seems as if the distinct agency of Providence, in bringing our church to that avowed and established tolerance, which was alike congenial to its spirit, and necessary to its purpose, is even more remarkable than that series of interpositions which has been referred to in the civil history of the country. And let it not be forgotten, that the toleration of our church is connected with our national love
of

of civil liberty, and that the state also is tolerant*.

The long reign of Queen Elizabeth seems to have been designed for the purpose of consolidating and perpetuating the great work which had been accomplished. During that period, all the energies of the prerogative were exercised for the exclusive maintenance of the established religion. And may we not believe, that this was necessary, till the new order of things should have established itself in the habits of the people.

That neither civil nor religious liberty was fully enjoyed in England till the Revolution, will not be denied. And that the weak, and sometimes most erroneous conduct of the race of Stuart was providentially over-ruled, so as to lead to that glorious consummation, is equally obvious. May

* It is to be lamented that there was a most unhappy instance of departure from this spirit in the reign of Charles II.

we not then suppose, that this family was brought upon the throne for this purpose, when we see, that when that object was ripe for accomplishment, the family, in its male line, was excluded from the sovereignty, on the clearest grounds of invincible necessity, and hopeless bigotry: an event, the occasion for which was as much to be deplored, as its motives are to be revered, and its consequences to be gloried in. This Revolution was one of those rare and critical cases, which can never be pleaded as a precedent by discontent or disaffection. It was a singular instance when a high duty was of necessity superseded by a higher; and when the paramount rights of law and conscience united in urging the painful but irresistible necessity.

God has made human society progressive, by the laws of nature, as well as by the order of his Providence. At some periods, this progress seems accelerated,—It is, doubtless, the wisdom of those who preside over communities, to mark all such periods,

periods, and instead of *resisting*, to *regulate* the progress. This did not the unfortunate house of Stuart. Their political errors shall not here be enumerated. Probably they would have been preserved from them, if they had not fought against divine Providence, in several instances. The spirit of the English reformation was that of rational but strict piety. This strictness, the conduct both of James and even of the first Charles, had a tendency to extinguish, by sanctioning, and, in a degree, enjoining the profanation of the Lord's day.—The order of public worship, as established by the reformers, was sufficiently majestic ;—no decorous circumstance being wanting, no exceptionable ceremonies being admitted. Instead of wisely and steadily guarding this admirable arrangement from encroachments, the unfortunate Charles endeavoured to bring back these genuflections, and other ceremonies, which the first reformers had discarded ; and enforced these innovations by a severity, still more abhorrent from

from the temper of the Anglican Church.— Under such mismanagement, those dissentient principles, which existed since the Reformation, were fanned into that furious flame, from which the English constitution in Church and State seems to have come forth unhurt, only because the designs of over-ruling Providence required their preservation.

The second Charles, untaught by the calamities of his virtuous but misguided father, disregarded all principle in his public, and outraged all decency in his private conduct. His reign was a continual rebellion against that Providence, which had destined the English nation to exemplify, both good government, and good morals, to the surrounding world. Perhaps, however, nothing short of the enormities of himself, and the misconduct of his successor, could have been sufficient to impel the English, after the miseries they had so lately experienced from anarchy, to the vindication of their just, constitutional rights.

rights. And probably, again, they would not have possessed that temper, which kept them from demanding *more* than their just rights, if they had not received that previous discipline from the hand of Heaven. It is worthy of notice, that when the house of Stuart was dispossessed of the throne of England, that same Providence caused a respite in favour of those two* Princesses who had not participated in the vices of their father's house. Of these, the elder was made a chief instrument in the great work which was to be accomplished. She was a cordial Protestant, and a pious Christian; and we cannot doubt, but her marriage with that Prince, who was appointed to perfect our liberties, was a special link in the chain of intermediate causes. She became a true English sovereign: a lover of the establishment, and an example of Christian charity. Strictly and habitually devout amid all the temptations of a court,

* Mary and Anne.

She was prepared to meet death with almost more than resignation.

The character of her sister was much less impressive; her good qualities being better fitted for private life than a throne. It would be hard to charge her with inheriting the faults of her ancestors, from all the grosser instances of which she was clearly exempt. Yet there certainly appears, in her attachments, much of that weak subjection of mind, (and a little, it may be feared, of that dissimulation too,) which had been so manifest in some former monarchs of her family. Yet even this weakness was over-ruled to great purposes. Had her attachment to the duchess of Marlborough been more moderate, the duke might not have possessed that supreme authority, which enabled him to humble, by so unexampled a series of victories, that power which had been the scourge of Protestantism, and the pest of Europe. And had her temper been less mutable, it might not have been so easy to accomplish a peace,

when

when the reasonable ends of war had been so fully answered.

It would almost seem that the issue of this Princess was deemed by Providence too central a branch of the Stuart family, to be entrusted with the newly-renovated constitution. A more distant connection had already been specially trained for this most important trust, though with little apparent probability of being called to exercise it, the Princess Anne having been no less than seventeen times pregnant. The death of the duke of Gloucester, the last of her family, at length turned the eyes of the English public toward the Princess Sophia; and from henceforth she and her issue were recognized as presumptive heirs to the crown. Many of the events which occurred during the last years of Queen Anne's reign, served not a little to enhance to all who were cordially attached to the English constitution, the providential blessing of so suitable a succession.

A more

A more remarkable event is scarcely to be found in the annals of the world. Nothing could be more essential to the interests of British liberty, than that they, who were concerned for its maintenance, should be possessed of the promptest and most unexceptionable means of filling the vacant throne. No Prince was fitted to their purpose, who was not zealously attached to the protestant religion; and it was desirable that he should, at the same time, possess such a title, on ground of consanguinity, as that the principle of hereditary monarchy might be as little departed from, as the exigencies of the case would admit. For the securing of both these radical objects, what an adequate provision was made in the princess Sophia, and her illustrious offspring! The connexion thus near, was made interesting by every circumstance which could engage the hearts of English Protestants. The Princess Sophia, was the only remaining child of that only remaining daughter of James the First, who being

VOL. II. 3 B married,

married to one of the most zealous protestant princes of the empire, became his partner in a series of personal and domestic distresses, in which his committing himself, on the cause of the Protestants of Bohemia, involved him and his family for near half a century. In her, all the rights of her mother, as well as of her father, were vested; and while by the electoral dignity, (of which her father had been deprived,) being restored to her husband, the Duke of Hanover, she seemed, in part, compensated for the afflictions of her earlier life,—her personal character, in which distinguished wit and talents were united with wisdom and piety *, both these last probably taught her in the school of adversity, procured for her the admiration of all who knew her, as well as the veneration of those whose

* See M. Chevreau's character of the Princess Sophia, quoted by Addison. Freeholder, No. 30. See also her two letters to Bishop Burnet, in his Life, annexed to his *own Times*.

religious sentiments were congenial with her own.

Such was the mother of George the First! She lived, enjoying her bright faculties to a very advanced age, to see a throne prepared for her son, far more glorious than that from which her father had been driven; or, what to her excellent mind was still more gratifying, she saw herself preserved, after the extinction of all the other branches of her paternal house, to furnish, in the most honourable instance possible, an invaluable stay and prop for that cause, on account of which her parents and their children seemed, for a time, to have "suffered the loss of all things."

Whether, then, we consider the succession of the House of Hanover, as the means of finally establishing our civil and religious constitution, which then only can be regarded as having attained a perfect triumph over every kind of opposition;—or whether we view it as a most signal act of that retributive goodness which has promised,

" that every one who forsaketh house, or
 brethren, or lands, for his sake, shall re-
 ceive manifold more even in this present
 life." I say, in whichsoever light we con-
 template it,—especially if we connect it with
 the series of previous events in England,—
 and, above all, compare it with the fate of
 the family from which the parent Princess
 had sprung,—but which, after being chas-
 tised to no purpose, was rejected, to make
 room for those, who had suffered in so
 much nobler a cause, and with so much
 better effect,—what can we say, but with
 the Psalmist, " that promotion cometh
 " neither from the east, nor from the west,
 " nor yet from the south.—But God is the
 " judge: he putteth down one, and setteth
 " up another. For in the hand of the
 " Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red;
 " it is full mixed, and he poureth out of
 " the same. But as for the dregs thereof,
 " all the wicked of the earth shall wring
 " them out and drink them. All the horns
 " also of the wicked shall be cut off, but
 " the

“ the horns of the righteous shall be
“ exalted.”

Another less momentous, yet highly interesting instance of providential remuneration, connected with this great event, must not be passed over. It shall be given in the words of a living and a near observer.—“ A wife,” says bishop Burnet, “ was to be sought for Prince Charles (the “ Emperor’s brother, whom the allies “ wished to establish on the Spanish throne,” “ among the Protestant courts, for there “ was not a suitable match in the Popish “ courts. He had seen the Princess of “ Anspach, and was much taken with her, “ so that great applications were made to “ persuade her to change her religion; “ but she could not be prevailed on to “ buy a crown at so dear a rate. And “ soon after, she was married to the Prince “ Electoral of Brunswick; which gave “ a glorious character of her to this nation. “ And her pious firmness is like to be re- “ warded, even in this life, by a much

“better crown than that which the re-
 “jected*.” Surely this portion of our
 Queen Caroline’s history deserves to be had
 in perpetual remembrance!

The same Prelate, speaking of King
 William, says,—“I considered him as a
 “person raised up by God, to resist the
 “power of France, and the progress of
 “tyranny and persecution. The thirty
 “years, from the year 1672 to his
 “death, in which he acted so great a
 “part, carry in them so many amazing
 “steps of a glorious and distinguishing
 “Providence, that in the words of David
 “he may be called,—*The man of God’s*
 “*right hand, whom he made strong for*
 “*himself.*”

But if there were just ground for this
 remark respecting this particular period,
 and this individual personage, what shall
 we say of the entire chain of providences,
 which runs through our whole national

* Burnet’s own Times, 1707.

history,

history, from the landing of our Saxon ancestors, to the present hour? May it not be confidently asked,—Is there at this day a nation upon earth, whose circumstances appear so clearly to have been arranged, and bound together, by the hands of HIM, “who does whatsoever he pleases both in heaven and earth?”

That the purposes of this great scheme have, as yet, been most inadequately answered, as far as our free agency is concerned, is a deep ground for our humiliation, but no argument against the reality of providential direction. The sacred history of the Jews, the only people who have been more distinguished than ourselves, presents to us not only their unparalleled obligations to the Almighty, but also a series of such abuses of those mercies, as at length brought upon them a destruction as unexampled as their guilt. The great purposes of heaven cannot be frustrated; but the instrument which embarrassed the process may, too surely, be

excluded from any share in the beneficial results, and be, on the contrary, the distressed victim of indignation. Thus Judea, in spite of all its apostacies, was made subservient to its original object. In spite of the barrenness of the parent tree, the mystic branch was made to spring from its roots; but this purpose being once served, the tree itself, nourished as it had been with the chief fountains of the earth, and with the richest dew of heaven, was "hewn down and cast into the fire."

Let England, let those especially of rank and influence, and, above all, let the personage whose high, but most awful trust it may be to have the delegated oversight of this vineyard, which God has "fenced and planted with the choicest vine;" let ALL feel the weight of their responsibility, and avert those judgments which divine justice may deem commensurate to our abused advantages!

We have been the object of admiration to the whole civilized world! Such have been the blessings conferred upon us, and such have been the bright lights, from time to time, raised up among us, that it could not be otherwise. But what would the effect have been, if our unexampled constitution, correspondent to its native design, had called forth, not the unblushing, because unpunishable, baseness of party profligacy, but the unfettered, disinterested, unanimous, exertion of commanding talent, of energetic application, and of invincible virtue! If a solicitude to digest the principles, to imbibe the spirit, and to exemplify the virtues of our illustrious worthies had been as assiduously excited by preceptors in their pupils, and by parents in their children, as a blind admiration of them, or a blinder vanity on account of them:—if those worthies had been as sedulously imitated, as they have been loudly extolled; and above all, if our national church establishment had been as universally

universally influential, as it is intrinsically admirable in its impressive ordinances, its benignant spirit, and its liberal, yet unadulterated doctrines :—We mean not, if these effects had been produced to any improbable Utopian extent, but in that measure, which was, in the nature of things, possible, and which the moral Governor of the Universe had an equitable right to look for.—If this had been realized, who can say what evils might have been prevented, what good might have been accomplished? How might Protestantism have spread through Europe, did our national morals keep pace with our profession! How happily might the sound philosophy of the English school, when thus illustrated, have precluded the impious principles and the blasphemous language of Voltaire and his licentious herd! And how would the widely diffused radiance of our then unclouded constitution have poured even upon surrounding countries so bright a day, as to have made rational liberty an object of general,

neral, but safe pursuit; and left no place for those works of darkness by which France has degraded herself, and outraged human nature!

Shall we then persevere in our inattention to the indications of Providence? Shall we persist in our neglect or abuse of the talents committed to us? Shall we be still unconscious that all our prosperity hangs suspended on the sole will of God, and that the moment of his ceasing to sustain us, will be the moment of our destruction? And shall not this be felt particularly by those who, by being placed highest in the community, would, in such a ruin, be the most signal victims, so they may now do most toward averting the calamity? On the whole, what is the almost audible language of Heaven to prince and people, to nobles and commoners, to church and state, but that of the great Author of our religion in his awful message to the long since desolated churches of Asia? "Repent, or else I will
" come unto thee quickly, and will fight
" against

“ against thee with the sword of my mouth ;
 “ and I will kill thy children with death,
 “ and all the churches shall know that I am
 “ he that searcheth the reins and hearts, and
 “ I will give to every one of you according
 “ to your works.”

CHAP. XL.

*On Christianity as a Principle of Action,
especially as it respects supreme Rulers.*

CHRISTIANITY is not an ingenious theory, a sublime but impracticable speculation, a fanciful invention to exercise the genius or sharpen the wit ; but it is a system for common apprehension, for general use, and daily practice. It is critically adapted to the character of man, intelligible to his capacity, appropriated to his wants, and accommodated to his desires. It contains, indeed, abstruse mysteries to exercise his faith, to inure him to submission, to habituate him to dependence ; but the sublimest of its doctrines involve deep practical consequences.

Revelation exhibits what neither the philosophy of the old, nor the natural religion of the modern, sceptics ever pretended to exhibit,

exhibit, a compact system of virtues and graces. Philosophy boasted only fair ideas, independent virtues, and disconnected duties. Christianity presents an unmutilated *whole*, in which a few simple but momentous premises induce a chain of consequences commensurate with the immortal nature of man. It is a scheme which not only displays every duty, but displays it in its just limitation and relative dependence; maintaining a lovely symmetry and fair proportion, which arise from the beautiful connection of one virtue with another, and of all virtues with that faith of which they are the fruits.

But the paramount excellence of Christianity is, that its effects are not limited, like the virtues of the Pagans, to the circumscribed sphere of this world. *Their* thoughts and desires, though they occasionally appeared, from their sublimity, to have been fitted for a wider range, were in a great measure shut in by the dark and narrow bounds of the present scene. At most, they

they appear to have had but transient glimpses of evanescent light, which, however, while they lasted, made them often break out into short but spirited apostrophes of hope, and even triumph. The Stoics talked deeply and eloquently of self-denial, but never thought of extending, by its exercise, their happiness to perpetuity. Philosophy could never give to divine and eternal things, sufficient distinctness or magnitude to induce a renunciation of present enjoyment, or to ensure to the conqueror, who should obtain a victory over this world, a crown of unfading glory. It never was explained, except in the page of Revelation, that God was himself an abundant recompence for every sacrifice which can be made for his sake. Still less was it ascertained, that, even in this life, God is to the good man his refuge and his strength, "a very present help in time of trouble." There is more rational consolation for both worlds, in these few words of the Almighty to Abraham,

ham,

ham, "Fear not, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward," than in all the happy conjectures, and ingenious probabilities, of all the philosophers in the world.

The religion, therefore, which is in this little work meant to be inculcated, is not the gloomy austerity of the ascetic; it is not the fierce intolerance of the bigot; it is not the mere assent to historical evidence, nor the mere formal observances of the nominal Christian. It is not the extravagance of the fanatic, nor the exterminating zeal of the persecuter: though all these faint shadows, or distorting caricatures, have been frequently exhibited as the genuine portraits of Christianity, by those who either never saw her face, or never came near enough to delineate her fairly, or who delighted to misrepresent and disfigure her.

True religion is, on the contrary, the most sober, most efficient, most natural, and therefore most happy exercise of right reason. It is, indeed, rationally made predominant,

dominant, by such an apprehension of what concerns us, in respect to our higher nature, as sets us above all undue attraction of earthly objects; and, in a great measure, frees the mind from its bondage to the body. It is that inward moral liberty which gives a man the mastery over himself, and enables him to pursue those ends which his heart and his conscience approve, without yielding to any of those warping influences by which all, except genuine Christians, must be, more or less, led captive. In a word, it is the influential knowledge of HIM, whom to know is wisdom—whom to fear is rectitude—whom to love is happiness. A principle this, so just in rational creatures to their infinite owner, benefactor, and end; so demanded by all that is perceivable in outward nature, so suggested by all that is right, and so required by all that is wrong in the human mind, that the common want of it, which almost every where presents itself, is only to be accounted for on the supposition of human nature being under

some unnatural perversion, some deep delirium, or fatal intoxication; which, by filling the mind with sickly dreams, renders it insensible to those facts and verities, of which awakened nature would have the most awful and most impressive perception.

Thus, to awaken our reason, to make us sensible of our infatuation, to point us to our true interest, duty and happiness, and to fit us for the pursuit, by making us love both the objects at which we are to aim, and the path in which we are to move, are the grand purposes of the Christian dispensation. If moral rectitude be an evil; if inward self-enjoyment be a grievance; if a right estimate of all things be folly; if a cheerful and happy use of every thing, according to its just and proper value, be misery; if a supreme, undeviating attachment to every thing that is true and honest, and just and pure, and lovely and of good report, be weakness: in short, if the truest relish for every thing substantially useful, every

every thing innocently pleasant in life, with the prospect, when life is ended of felicity unspeakable and eternal, be moping melancholy, then, and not otherwise, ought the religion of the New Testament to be treated with neglect, or viewed with suspicion ; as if it were hostile to human comfort, unsuitable to high station, or incompatible with any circumstances which right reason sanctions.

The gospel is, in infinite mercy, brought within the apprehension of the poor and the ignorant ; but its grandeur, like that of the God who gave it, is not to be lowered by condescension. In its humblest similitudes, the discerning mind will feel a majestic simplicity, identical with that of created nature ; and, in its plainest lessons, an extent of meaning which spreads into infinitude. When we yield ourselves to its influences, its effects upon us are correspondent to its own nature. It lays the axe to the root of every kind of false greatness, but it leaves us in a more confirmed, and far

happier enjoyment of all which really gives lustre to the character, which truly heightens the spirit, which strengthens, ennobles, and amplifies the mind. It announces to us a spiritual sovereign, to whose unseen dominion the proudest potentates of the earth are in unconscious, but most real subjection; but who, notwithstanding his infinite greatness, condescends to take up his residence in every human heart that truly yields to his influence; suppressing in it every unruly and unhappy passion; animating it with every holy and heavenly temper, every noble and generous virtue; fitting it for all the purposes of Providence, and fortifying it against calamities, by a peace which passeth all understanding.

That this is a view of Christianity, founded in irrefragable fact, and peculiarly demanding our regard, appears from the uniform language of its divine Author, respecting himself and his mission, on all occasions where a summary annunciation was fitting. It is a spiritual kingdom, on the eve of actual

actual establishment, of which he gives notice. To this ultimate idea, the other great purposes of his incarnation are to be referred. They over whom he means to reign are attainted rebels. He, therefore, so fulfils every demand of that law which they had violated, as to reverse the attainder, on grounds of eternal justice. They were, also, captives to a usurper, whose mysterious power he has so broken as to disable him from detaining any who are cordially willing to break their bonds. And having thus removed all obstacles, he offers privileges of infinite benefit; and demands no submission, no dereliction, no observance; but what, in the very nature of things, are indispensable to the recovery of moral health, moral liberty, and moral happiness; and what HE, by the gracious influences of his ever-present Spirit, will render, not only attainable, but delightful to the honest and humble heart.

The royal person, then, should early and constantly be habituated to consider herself

as peculiarly under the government, and in a most especial manner needing the protection and guidance of this Almighty Sovereign; looking to his word for her best light, and to his spirit for her best strength; performing all that she undertakes, in the manner most perfectly conformed to his laws, and most clearly subservient to the interests of his spiritual kingdom; submitting all events to his wisdom, acknowledging no less his particular than his general Providence; and, above all, praying daily for his support, depending on his goodness for success, and submitting to his will in disappointment. In fact, to none, in so eminent a sense as to Princes, does that sentiment of an inspired instructor belong: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God."

She should practically understand, that religion, though it has its distinct and separate duties, yet it is not by any means a distinct and separate thing, so as to make

up

up a duty of itself, disconnected with other duties; but that it is a grand, and universally governing principle, which is to be the fountain of her morality, and the living spring of all her actions: that religion is not merely a thing to be retained in the mind, as a dormant mass of inoperative opinions, but which is to be brought, by every individual, into the detail of every day's deeds; which, in a Prince, is to influence his private behaviour, as well as his public conduct; which is to regulate his choice of ministers, and his adoption of measures; which is to govern his mind, in making war and making peace; which is to accompany him, not only to the closet, but to the council; which is to fill his mind, whether in the world or in retirement, with an abiding sense of the vast responsibility which he is under, and the awful account to which he will one day be called, before that Being, who lodges the welfare of so many millions in his hands. In fine, to borrow the words of the pious

archbishop Secker, "It ought to be explicitly taught, and much dwelt upon, that religion extends its authority to *every thing* : to the most worldly, the commonest, the lowest" (and surely, still more to the highest earthly) "things ; binding us to behave reasonably, decently, humbly, honourably, meekly, and kindly in them all ; and that its interfering so far, instead of being a hardship, is a great blessing to us, because it interferes always for our good."

Parasites have treated some weak Princes, as if they were not of the same common nature with those whom they govern ; and as if, of course, they were not amenable to the same laws. Christianity, however, does not hold out two sorts of religion, one for the court, and one for the country ; one for the Prince, and another for the people. Princes, as well as subjects, who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, shall reap eternal life. As there is the same code of laws, so there is the same promise annexed to

to the observance of them.—“If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” There are no exempt cases. The maxim is of universal application. There will be no pleading of privilege on that day, when the dead, SMALL and GREAT, shall stand before God; when they shall be “judged out of those things which are written, in the book of God’s remembrance, according to their works.”

So far from a dispensation of indulgences being granted to Princes, they are bound even to more circumspection. They are set on a pinnacle, the peculiar objects of attention and imitation. Their trust is of larger extent, and more momentous importance. Their influence involves the conduct of multitudes. Their example should be even more correct, because it will be pleaded as a precedent. Their exalted station, therefore, instead of furnishing excuses for omission, does but enlarge the obligation of performance. They may avail themselves

selves of the same helps to virtue, the same means for duty; and they have the same, may we not rather say, they have even a stronger assurance of divine aid, since that aid is promised to be proportioned to the exigence; and the exigencies of Princes are obviously greater than those of any other class of men.

Power and splendour are not to be considered as substitutes for virtue, but as instruments for its promotion, and means for its embellishment. The power and splendour of sovereigns are confirmed to them by the laws of the state, for the wisest and most beneficial purposes. But these illustrious appendages are evidently not meant for their personal gratification, but to give impressiveness and dignity to their station; to be suitable and honourable means of supporting an authority, which Providence has made indispensable to the peace and happiness of society; and on the adequate energy of which,

which, the security and comfort of all subordinate ranks, in their due gradations, so materially depend.

Can we hesitate to conclude, that at the last great audit, Princes will be called to account, not only for all the wrong which they have done, but for all the right which they have neglected to do? Not only for all the evil they have perpetrated, but for all that they, wilfully, have permitted? For all the corruptions which they have sanctioned, and all the good which they have discouraged. It will be demanded, whether they have employed royal opulence, in setting an example of wise and generous beneficence, or of contagious levity and voluptuousness? Whether they have used their influence, in promoting objects clearly for the public good, or in accomplishing the selfish purposes of mercenary favourites? And whether, on the whole, their public and private conduct tended more to diffuse religious principle, and sanction Christian virtue, or to lend support to fashionable
pro-

profligacy, and to undermine national morality?

At the same time, it is to be remembered, that they will be judged by that *omniscient* Being, who sees the secret bent and hidden inclinations of the heart; and who knows that the best Prince cannot accomplish all the good he wishes, nor prevent all the evil he disapproves:—by that *merciful* Being, who will recompense pure desires and upright intentions, even where providential obstacles prevented their being carried into execution:—by that *compassionate* Being, who sees their difficulties, observes their trials, weighs their temptations, commiserates their dangers, and takes most exact cognizance of circumstances, of which no human judge can form an adequate idea.—Assured, as we are, that this gracious method of reckoning will be extended to all, may we not be confident, that it will be peculiarly applied, where the case most expressly stands in need of it? And may we not rest persuaded, that if there is a spectacle which

our

our Almighty Ruler beholds with peculiar complacency on earth, and will recompense with a crown of distinguished brightness in heaven, it is a SOVEREIGN DOING JUSTLY, LOVING MERCY, AND WALKING HUMBLY WITH GOD.

But is religion to be pursued by Princes, only as a guide of conduct, a law by which they are to live and act: as a principle, which, if cultivated, will qualify them for eternal felicity? These are invaluable benefits, but they do not *wholly* express all that Princes, in particular, need from religion. *They*, in an eminent degree, require consolation and support for this life, as well as a title to happiness in the life to come. *They*, above all human beings, need some powerful resource to bear them up against the agitations, and the pressures, to which their high station inevitably exposes them.

To whom on this earth are troubles and heart-achs so sure to be multiplied, as to Princes, especially to those of superior understanding and sensibility? Who, of
any

any other rank, are exposed to such embarrassing trials, such difficult dilemmas? We speak not merely of those unfortunate monarchs, who have undergone striking vicissitudes, or who have been visited with extraordinary calamities; but of such also whom the world would rather agree to call prosperous and happy!—Yet let him who doubts this general truth, read the accounts given by all our historians of the last years of King William, and the last months of Queen Anne, and then let him pronounce what could be more trying, than those disappointments and disgusts which sunk into the very soul of the one, or those cares and agitations which finally destroyed the peace of the other?

If there be then any secret in the nature of things, any clearly infallible remedy by which such distresses may be assuaged, by which self-command, self-possession, and even self-enjoyment may be secured in the midst of the greatest trials to which mortality is liable,—would not this be an ob-

ject to which the view of Princes, even above all the rest of mankind, should be directed ; and in comparifon of which, they might juftly hold cheap all the honours of their birth, and all the prerogatives of their rank ?

Christian piety, when real in itfelf, and when thoroughly eftablifhed in the heart, and in the habits, *is* this fecret.—When the mind is not only confcientioufly, but affectionately religious ;—when it not only fears God, as the Almighty Sovereign, but loves and confides in him, as the all-gracious Father ; not merely inferred to be fuch, from the beauty and benignity apparent in the works of nature, but rationally underftood to be fuch, from the discoveries of divine grace in the word of God ;—and let us add, no lefs rationally felt to be fuch, from the transforming influence of that word upon the heart : then, acts of devotion are no longer a penance, but a refource, and a refreshment ; in fo much that the voluptuary would as foon relinquifh thofe gratifications

cations for which he lives, as the devout Christian would give up his daily intercourse with his Maker.—But it is not in stated acts merely that such devotion lives,—it is an habitual sentiment which diffuses itself through the whole of life, purifying, exalting, and tranquillizing every part of it, smoothing the most rugged paths,—making the yoke of duty easy, and the burden of care light. It is as a perennial spring in the very centre of the heart, to which the wearied spirit betakes itself for refreshment and repose.

In this language there is no enthusiasm. It is, in spite of the cold railery of the sceptic, the language of truth and soberness. The Scriptures ascribe to Christian piety this very efficacy; and every age and nation furnish countless instances of its power to raise the human mind to a holy heroism, superior to every trial. “Were there not,” says the sober and dispassionate Tillotson, “something *real* in the principles of religion, it is impossible that
“ they

“ they should have so remarkable and so
 “ regular an effect, to support the mind
 “ in every condition, upon so great a
 “ number of persons, of different degrees
 “ of understanding, of all ranks and con-
 “ ditions, young and old, learned and
 “ unlearned, in so many distant places,
 “ and in all ages of the world, the records
 “ whereof are come down to us. I say so
 “ real, and so frequent, and so regular an
 “ effect as this, cannot, with any colour of
 “ reason, be ascribed either to blind chance
 “ or mere imagination, but must have a
 “ real, and regular, and uniform cause,
 “ proportionable to so great and general an
 “ effect *.”

We are persuaded, that if the subject
 of this chapter be considered with an at-
 tention equal to its importance, every
 other virtue will spring up, as it were
 spontaneously, in the mind, and a high
 degree of excellence, both public and pri-

* Sermon XL.

vate, be instinctively pursued. In such a case, how happy would be the distinguished individual, and how inconceivably benefited and blessed would be the community!

Pious sovereigns are, at all times, the richest boon which Heaven can bestow on a country. The present period makes us more than ever sensible of their importance. A period in which law has lost its force, rank its distinction, and order its existence; in which ancient institutions are dissolving, and new powers, of undescribed character, and unheard-of pretension, are involving Europe in contests and convulsions, of which no human foresight can anticipate the end. In what manner *we* may be affected by this unprecedented state of things, what perils *we* may have to face, what difficulties to struggle with, or what means of final extrication may be afforded us, it is not in man to determine. But certain it is, that even in the most threatening circumstances, the obvious, unaffected, consistent piety of the Sovereign, will

will do more to animate and unite a British Public, than the eloquence of a Demosthenes, or the songs of a Tyrtæus ; and it will be as sure a pledge of eventual success, as either the best disciplined armies or the most powerful navies. Who can say how much we are indebted for our safety hitherto to the blessing of a King and Queen, who have distinguished themselves above all the sovereigns of their day, by strictness of moral conduct and by reverence for religion ? May their successors, to the latest posterity, improve upon, instead of swerving from, their illustrious example !

THE END.

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